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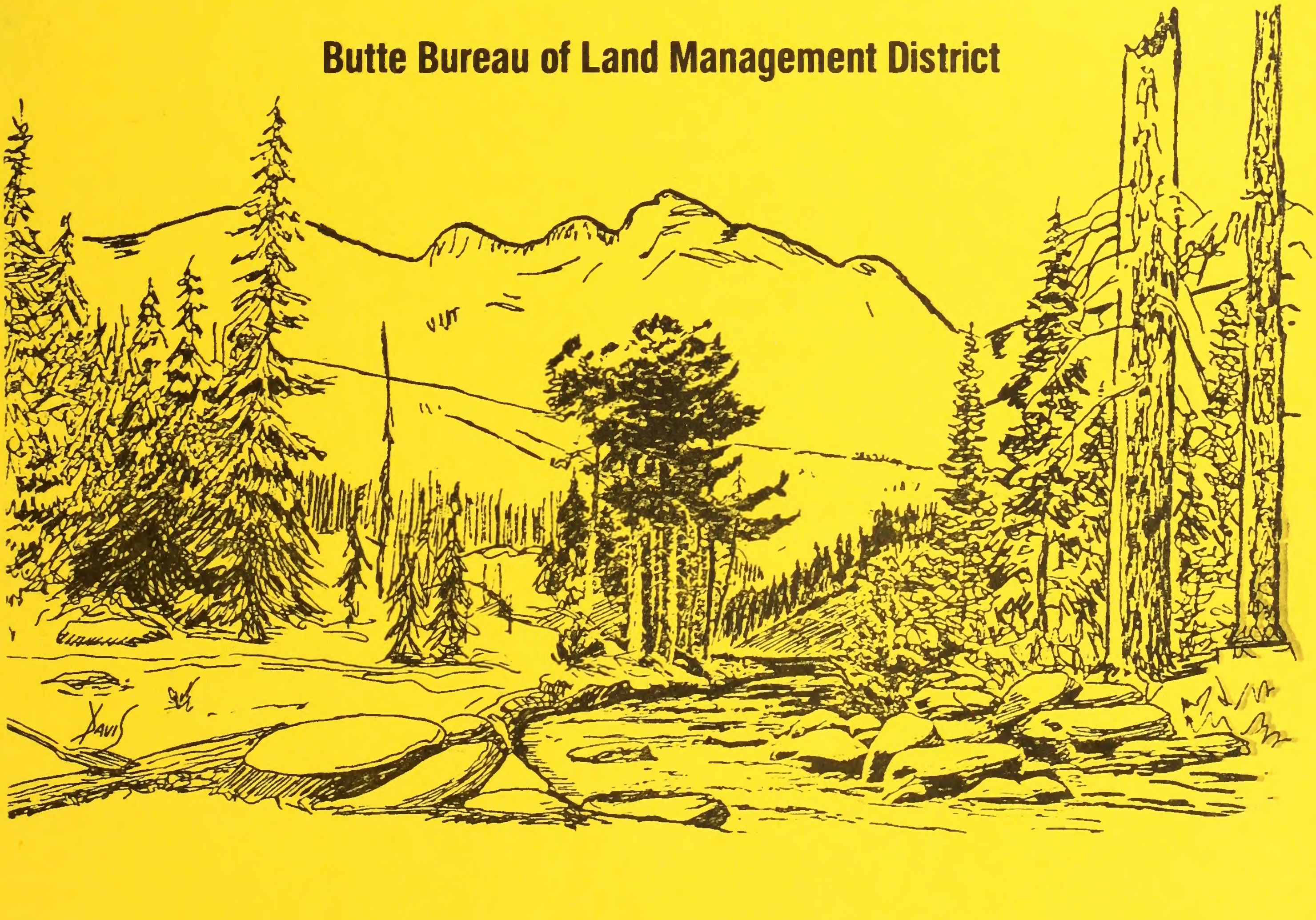
FINAL DECISION

MONTANA OVERTHRUST BELT WILDERNESS INVENTORY

Butte Bureau of Land Management District



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United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Montana State Office
222 North 32nd Street
P.O. Box 30157
Billings, Mt. 59107

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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Introduction

This document announces the final inventory decision for Bureau of Land Management lands under wilderness review within the Rocky Mountain Overthrust Belt.

The Overthrust Belt is a zone of "geologically disturbed" lands in the Rocky Mountain region which has high potential for oil and gas discoveries. All of the Overthrust Belt lands in Montana are within the Butte BLM District. The inventory for these lands was accelerated because of the potential for energy conflicts.

On September 26, 1979, a proposed wilderness study area decision was announced in the Federal Register which proposed to drop 28 inventory units consisting of 151,739 acres from further wilderness consideration. Another 20 inventory units totalling 169,584 acres were proposed to become wilderness study areas. A 90-day public comment period beginning October 15, 1979, and ending January 15, 1980, followed the proposed decision announcement.

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Decision

A final decision has been made as a result of public comments and intensive inventory results. Twenty-one inventory units totalling 131,768 acres have been identified as containing wilderness characteristics and will become wilderness study areas. The remaining 27 inventory units which total 249,360 acres* will be dropped from wilderness consideration.

What This Decision Means

The inventory units designated wilderness study areas as a result of this decision will be retained for further study through BLM's land use planning system. The significance of the land use decisions to be made during the study phase necessitates consideration of significant resource trade offs. Those decisions will be the basis of the Bureau's wilderness recommendations to the Secretary of Interior, President and Congress.

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* This acreage figure differs from the acreage proposed to drop reported in the September 26, 1979, Federal Register because of acreage recalculation.

Both suitable and unsuitable wilderness recommendations must be considered and acted upon by Congress before these lands either become designated wilderness or are dropped from consideration.

These lands will be studied as quickly as Bureau scheduling and financial constraints permit. Public involvement will again be solicited during the study phase.

When Decision Effective

Any person who disagrees with this decision and has information which may influence the decision, may file a protest with:

STATE DIRECTOR (930)
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
P.O. BOX 30157
222 NORTH 32ND STREET
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59107

Protests must be filed with the Montana State Director by 4:30 p.m., April 30, 1980. No specific forms need be used in filing a protest, however, protests must be identified as follows:

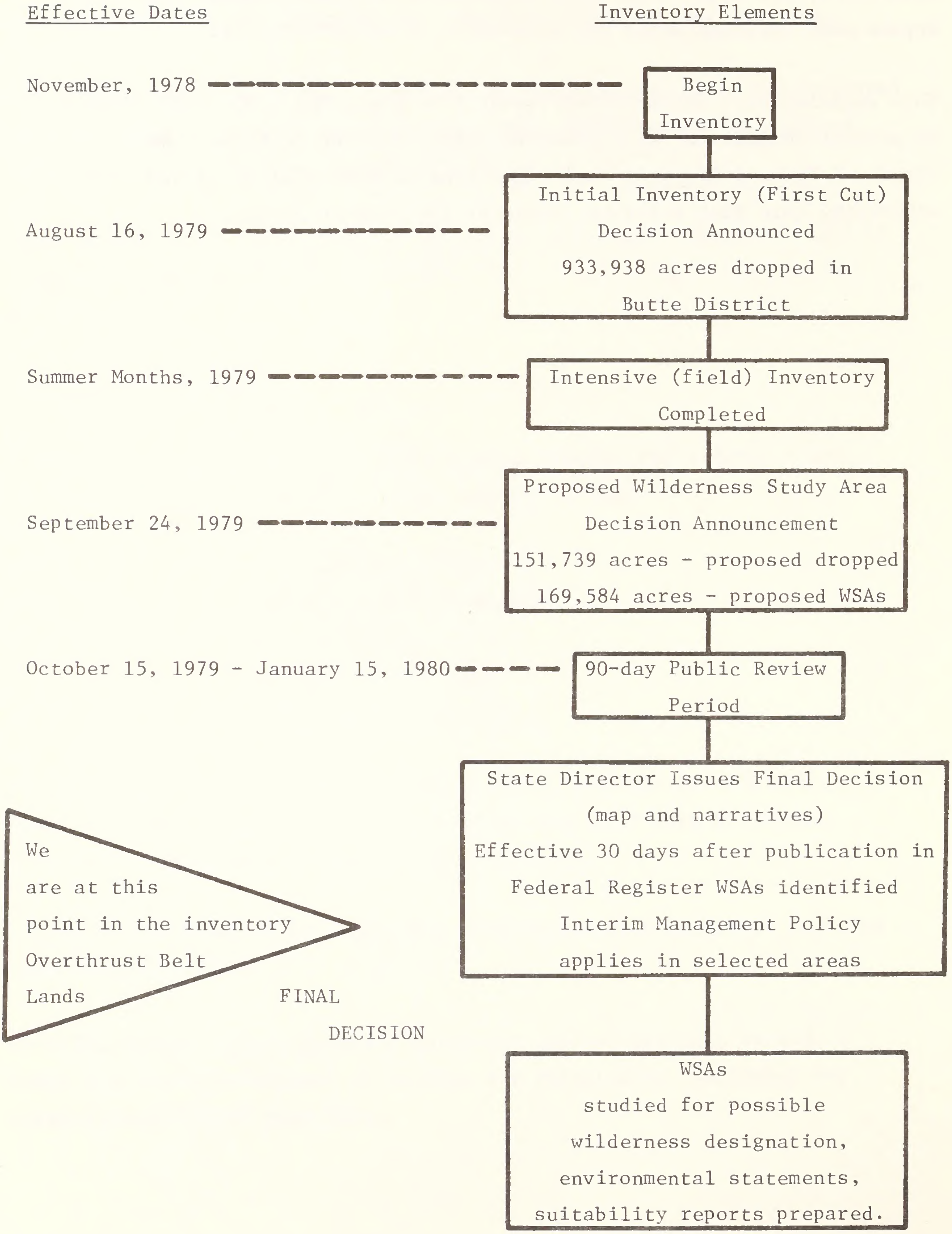
"PROTEST TO MONTANA STATE DIRECTOR'S FINAL WILDERNESS INVENTORY DECISION - OVERTHRUST BELT UNITS."

Protests should address specific inventory unit(s) and must include a clear and concise statement of reasons for the protest, including any supporting documents available.

Should any protests be filed on any inventory units, the State Director will consider such protests and issue a decision. Any person adversely affected by the State Director's decision on a written protest may appeal such decision under the provisions of 43 CFR, Part 4.

This decision will become effective at 4:30 p.m., April 30, 1980, (close of protest period) for all inventory units on which no protest was filed. A Federal Register notice and news release will be issued announcing this fact after the close of the protest period.

Overthrust Belt
BLM Wilderness Inventory
Butte District


Effective Dates
Inventory Elements
November, 1978
Begin Inventory
August 16, 1979
Initial Inventory (First Cut) Decision Announced 933,938 acres dropped in Butte District
Summer Months, 1979
Intensive (field) Inventory Completed
September 24, 1979
Proposed Wilderness Study Area Decision Announcement 151,739 acres - proposed dropped 169,584 acres - proposed WSAs
October 15, 1979 - January 15, 1980
90-day Public Review Period
State Director Issues Final Decision (map and narratives) Effective 30 days after publication in Federal Register WSAs identified Interim Management Policy applies in selected areas
We are at this point in the inventory Overthrust Belt Lands
FINAL DECISION
WSAs studied for possible wilderness designation, environmental statements, suitability reports prepared.

SUMMARY

MONTANA STATE DIRECTOR'S
FINAL OVERTHRUST BELT INVENTORY DECISION

BUTTE BLM DISTRICT

I. Identified Wilderness Study Areas:

A. Dillon Resource Area

Unit Number	Unit Name	Acreage Identified for WSA Status	Acreage Dropped From Wilderness Consideration
MT-076-001	Ruby Mountains	26,357	5,643
MT-076-002	Blacktail Mountains	19,189	2,261
MT-076-007	E. Fork of Blacktail Deek Cr.	6,180	
MT-076-022	Hidden Pasture Creek	15,475	
MT-076-026	Bell/Limekiln Canyons	6,629	16,100
MT-076-028	Henneberry Ridge	10,111	27,589
MT-076-034	Farlin Creek	1,260	80
MT-076-063	Tobacco Root Tack-Ons	860	
MT-076-069	Axolotl Lakes	6,578	866
MT-076-079	Madison Tack-Ons	1,469	51
	Totals	94,108	52,590

B. Headwaters Resource Area

Unit Number	Unit Name	Acreage Identified for WSA Status	Acreage Dropped From Wilderness Consideration
MT-075-102	Blind Horse Creek	4,927	
MT-075-105	Chute Mountain	3,085	
MT-075-106	Deep Creek/Battle Creek	3,086	
MT-075-107	N. Fork of Sun River	196	
MT-075-110	Beavor Meadows	595	
MT-075-114	Elkhorn	3,585	2,113
MT-075-115	Black Sage	5,976	
MT-075-133	Yellowstone River Island	53	
	Totals	21,503	2,113

C. Garnet Resource Area

Unit Number	Unit Name	Acreage Identified for WSA Status	Acreage Dropped From Wilderness Consideration
MT-074-151a	Hoodoo Mountain	11,380	1,293
MT-074-151b	Gallagher Creek	4,257	1,670
MT-074-155	Guigg West	520	
	Totals	16,157	2,963
	Grand Total	131,768	

II. Areas not Recommended as Wilderness Study Areas

A. Dillon Resource Area

Unit Number	Unit Name	Acreage Identified for WSA Status	Acreage Dropped From Wilderness Consideration
MT-076-003	Blacktail Mountains West		2,130
MT-076-004	Big Spring Gulch		43,327
MT-076-006	White Hills South		8,850
MT-076-008	Basin Creek North		17,960
MT-076-009	Antelope Flats		14,130
MT-076-010	Basin Creek South		10,815
MT-076-011	Lima Reservoir		5,360
MT-076-015	Red Rocks Refuge North		440
MT-076-024	Camp Creek South		7,200
MT-076-025	McCartney Mtn./Sandy Hollow		16,380
MT-076-029	Bachelor Mountain		13,000
MT-076-031	Cold Spring Creek		7,100
MT-076-033	Garrett Hill		1,120
MT-076-042	Red Rock River Island #2		3
MT-076-043	Red Rock River Island #1		0
MT-076-047	Jimmy New Creek		6,275
MT-076-051	Maiden Rock Islands		1
MT-076-054	Nez Perce Hollow		12,743
MT-076-059	Block Mountain		6,700
MT-076-070	Sweetwater		7,749
MT-076-071	Elk Gulch		10,292
	Total		191,575

B. Headwaters Resource Area

Unit Number	Unit Name	Acreage Identified for WSA Status	Acreage Dropped From Wilderness Consideration
MT-075-123	Missouri River Island		22
MT-075-124	Missouri River Island		12
MT-075-125	Missouri River Island		5
MT-075-126	Missouri River Island		17
MT-075-134	Yellowstone River Island		23
MT-075-138	Missouri River Island		40
	Total		119
	Grand Total		249,360

BUTTE DISTRICT

INVENTORY UNITS TO BE DESIGNATED

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-001

Unit Name Ruby Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Ruby Mountain unit is located fifteen miles east of Dillon and two miles west of Alder, Montana. Access to the area is available from the east and west via public and private roads.

The unit is bounded by private and state lands on the north, east and west sides. The southern boundary was initially formed by private lands and the Cottonwood Creek Road. The original inventory unit contained 32,000 acres of public, roadless land, 2,240 acres of private inholdings and 1,280 acres of State land.

During the intensive inventory one major boundary adjustment was made in the southern portion of the unit. Approximately 5,643.5 acres were deleted due to a heavy concentration of on-site imprints combined with adjacent off-site intrusions. These human impacts both past and present, have a substantial influence on the apparent naturalness and solitude of the area.

The new boundaries enclose 26,356.5 acres of public, roadless land, 640 acres of state land and 960 acres of private inholdings.

2. Naturalness:

The Ruby Mountain Unit is dominated by a northsouth ridge line and the perpendicular drainage of Garden Creek. It is an area of great diversity with sagebrush grasses (25%), Douglas fir, Limber pine and Aspen forests (75%), green meadows, perennial streams, dry canyons to the north and lush drainages to the south, sheer cliffs, and mountains of variable heights and slopes. Elevations range from a low of 5,250 feet near the east to a high of 9,391 feet at the summit of Ruby Mountain in the northcentral portion of the unit. The unit appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature.

There is, however, one major impact on the overall naturalness of the unit. This is a bladed, cattle driveway which extends one mile in length. A portion of this intrusion is highly visible due to its mountain side location and lack of vegetative screening. Rehabilitation would be timely but is feasible through hand labor.

Other impacts of lesser signficance include five miles of fence, roughly thirteen miles of vehicle ways, four inconspicuous watering tanks, an inactive prospect pit of about a quarter acre in size, two isolated corrals, a tin shack and a small, wooden shed. All of these human imprints could be rehabilitated through natural processes and hand labor.

Although there are impacts within the area, neither their individual nor cumulative impact is great enough to significantly affect the overall, apparent naturalness of the Ruby Mountain Unit. In sum, the area appears primarily natural due to its size, screening qualities and outstanding, physical attributes.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Ruby Mountain Unit provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Vegetative screening and topographic diversity is excellent throughout the area, creating conditions whereby visitors can easily avoid the sights and sounds of others within the area.

While the natural character of the landscape helps to create outstanding opportunities for solitude, it offers the potential for superb hiking, backpacking, cross-county skiing and snowshoeing experiences. Additional activities available are elk and mule deer hunting, trout fishing along Trout Creek, horseback riding, photography, nature study and rock scrambling along the rock cliffs and talus slopes throughout the north portion of the unit.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Ruby Mountain unit contains supplemental values in the form of unique geological, ecological, scenic and historical features.

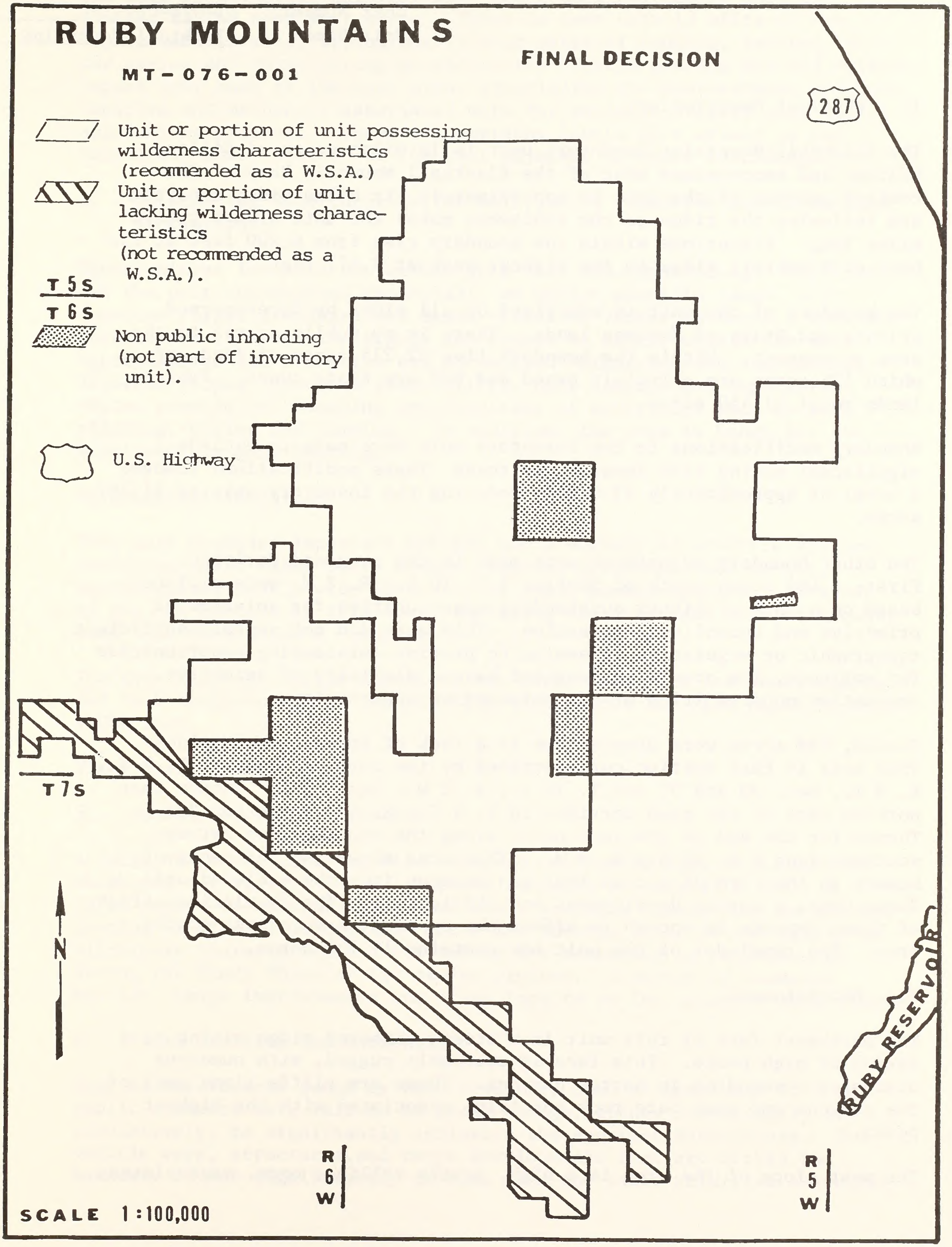
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

Opposition to retention of this area for further study is greater than support due primarily to concern for talc and other mining. Several indicated that it would be difficult to manage as wilderness and should be managed for multiple use. Some favored closure of roads while others want roads to remain open to facilitate access for various activities. Several roads were identified as necessary to continue various operations such as ranching, recreation, etc. High mineral potential (several kinds) prompted numerous comments. Intrusions, as identified in the inventory phase, encouraged several to request dropping the unit. It was also suggested that the area be designated as ACEC.

6. Final Decision and Rationle

This area will be retained for wilderness study. The area fulfills all the criteria found in Section 2C of the 1964 Wilderness Act and the Wilderness Inventory Handbook. Consideration for other resource uses will be made during the study phase.


RUBY MOUNTAINS
MT-076-001
FINAL DECISION
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.)
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
T 5 S
T 6 S
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
U.S. Highway
287
T 7 S
N
RUBY RESERVOIR
R 6 W
R 5 W
SCALE 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number; MT-076-002
Unit Name: Blacktail Mountains

1. Physical Description:

The Blacktail Mountains inventory unit is 16 miles south of Dillon, Montana and emcompasses most of the Blacktail Mountain Range. The central portion of the unit is approximately six miles wide; a narrow arm following the ridge to the southwest makes the unit almost twelve miles long. Elevations within the boundary rise from 6,200 feet at the base of Blacktail Ridge to the highest peak at 9,477 feet.

The boundary of the unit is comprised on all sides by interspersed private and State of Montana lands. There is no public access to the area at present. Within the boundary lies 22,215 acres of land, of which 125 acres are privately owned and 640 are State owned. Public lands total 21,450 acres.

Boundary modifications to the inventory unit were made to exclude significant mining site impacts and roads These modifications removed a total of approximately 83 acres, reducing the inventory unit to 21,367 acres.

Two other boundary adjustment were made in the proposed decision. First, 1,460 acres south of Section 8 T. 10 S., R. 8 W. were excluded based on a lack of either outstanding opportunities for solutide or primitive and unconfined recreation. This area did not contain sufficient topographic or vegetative screening to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area also does not have a diversity of primitive recreation opportunities or one outstanding opportunity.

Second, 698 acres were dropped due to a lack of apparent naturalness. This area is that portion curcumscribed by the road corridor in T. 9 S., R. 8 W., Sec. 30 and 31 and T. 10 S., R. 8 W., Section 6: Thence that portion east of the road corridor in T. 9 S., R. 8 W., Section 32: Thence for the end of the road north along the section line between sections land 6 T. 10 S., R. 8 W.. This area shows the influence of humans in the form of a road that can be seen from the excluded unit, a Sheep Camp, a spring development and old logging. The cumulative affect of these impacts is enough to affect the apparent naturalness of the area. The remainder of the unit now contains 19,189 acres.

2. Naturalness:

The northeast face of this unit is a steep, timbered ridge rising to a series of high peaks. This face is extremely rugged, with numerous drainages descending in narrow canyons. There are cliffs along many of the canyons and some bare rock and talus associated with the highest peaks.

The west slope of the area is a high, gently rolling, open, sage plateau.

The area is primarily natural, with man's imprints almost entirely limited to the open west slope. There is less than 13 miles of low impact vehicle ways, approximately four miles of fencing, fencing, five old cabins and three spring developments. Cattle grazing has had evident impact over much of the open area, especialyin the southernmost portions. Vehicles and machinery associated with the enclosed private land affect apparent naturalness, however, topography limits this effect to the relatively small portion of the unit adjacent to these inholdings.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude of Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude within this area are outstanding. The fact the the unit encompasses essentially an entire mountain range, with numerous rugged drainages and dense stands of timber, assures a user the opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the unit. Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are outstanding. Timbered slopes. numerous sheer cliffs, deep canyons and impressive vistas provide out standing opportunities of activities such as rock climbing, hiking and camping. In addition, the area is known for its excellent big game hunting.

Supplemental Features:

This unit provides important habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including deer, black bear, cougar, coyote, yellow-bellied marmot, golden eagles, and a wide diversity of small mammal species. Portions of the elk habitat in this area, including and important calving ground, have been designated a "crucial."

The area displays unique scenic values associated with its sheer cliffs and rock formations, and its off-site vistas from the five peaks of over 9,000 feet.

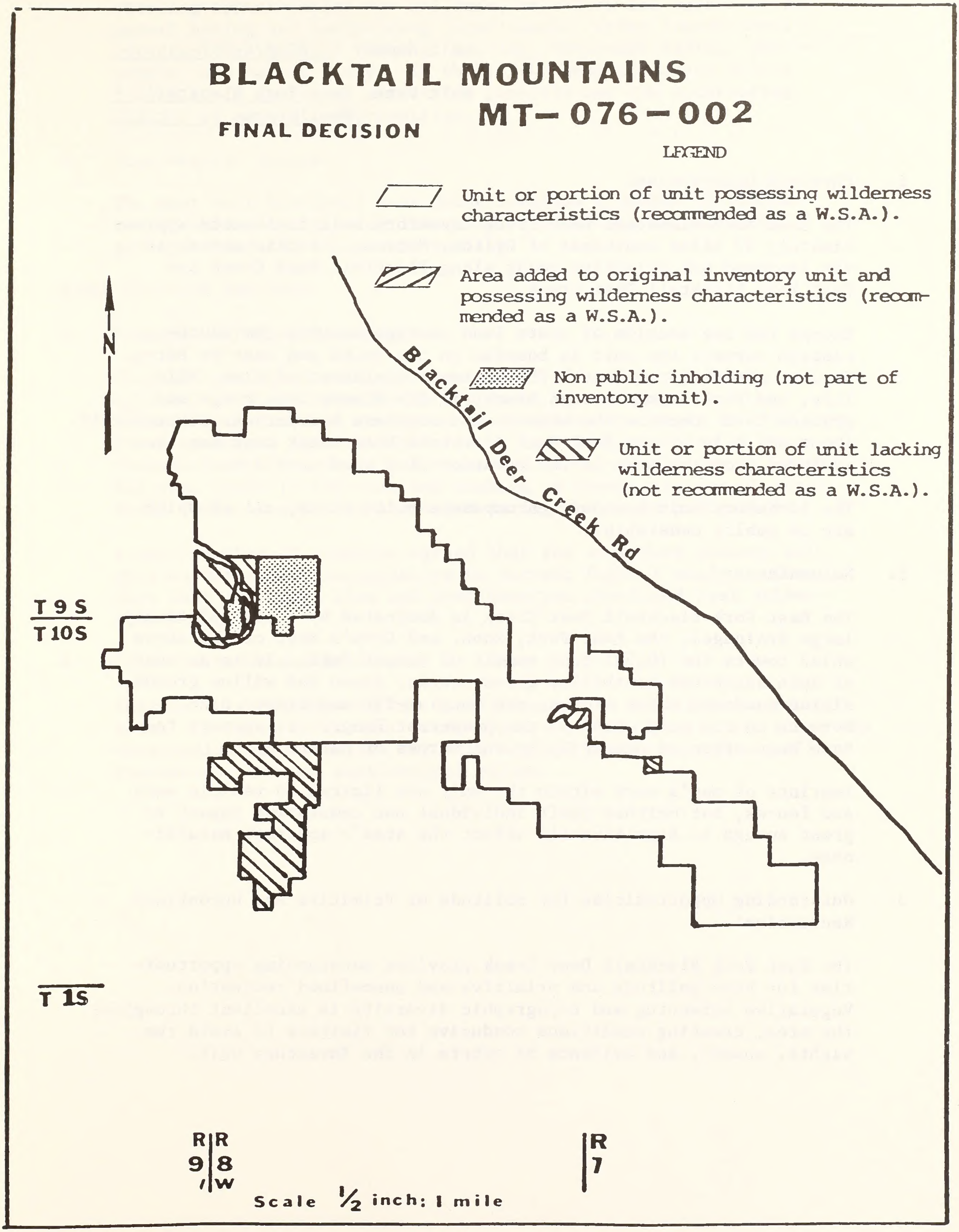
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

A large number of comments were received concerning this unit, most of which did not agree with the proposed decision to make it a WSA. A large number of comments mentioned other resource values such as timber, grazing or mineral potential. These are factors which do not relate to wilderness characteristics, but rather are something to be looked at during the Study Phase of the review process. A number of comments mention range improvements and other impacts on the apparent naturalness.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

None of the impacts found by the inventory team of mentioned in the public comments were felt to be great enough, either individually or cumulatively, to signifiantly influence the apparent naturalness. The vehicle ways, structures,and range developments that are within the boundary do not significantly detract form the basic primitive character of the area. The relatively large size of the inventory unit and the fact that it encompasses essentially an entire mountain range contributes to the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The decision to recommend this unit, containing 19,189 acres, remains unchanged.



BLACKTAIL MOUNTAINS

MT-076-002

FINAL DECISION

LEGEND
▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
▨ Area added to original inventory unit and possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
▒ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
▧ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
N
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
T 9 S
T 10 S
T 1S
R 9
R 8 W
R 7
Scale ½ inch: 1 mile

Unit Number MT-076-007

Unit Name East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek

1. Physical Description:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek inventory unit is located approximately 33 miles southeast of Dillon, Montana. Public access is via improved and primitive roads along Blacktail Deer Creek and East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek.

Except for one section of state land contiguous with the southeastern corner, the unit is bounded on the south and east by Forest Service administered land. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks administered Blacktail Elk Winter Game Range and private land comprise the western and northern boundaries, respectively. About one mile of the East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek Road has been excluded from the unit by the creation of a road corridor.

The inventory unit boundary encompasses 6,180 acres, all of which are in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek is dominated by three relatively large drainages, the East Fork, Robb, and Crow's Nest creeks above which towers the 10,581-foot summit of Sunset Peak. It is an area of open sagebrush foothills, grassy parks, aspen and willow groves, alpine meadows, talus slopes, and Douglas-fir and limber pine forests on the west slope of the Snowcrest Range. It appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Imprints of man's work within the unit are limited to vehicle ways and fences, but neither their individual nor cumulative impact is great enough to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Vegetative screening and topographic diversity is excellent throughout the area, creating conditions conducive for visitors to avoid the sights, sounds, and evidence of others in the inventory unit.

While the natural character of the landscape helps to create outstanding opportunities for solitude, it offers the potential for superb hiking and backpacking experiences. Other recreational opportunities include fishing, hunting, horseback riding, photography, and nature study. In short, the area possesses both a diversity in number of activities possible and the outstanding quality of several opportunities.

4. Supplemental Values:

The East Fork Blacktail Deer Creek contains a number of supplemental values in its wide diversity of plant and animal life, geologic history, and scenic quality.

FINAL DECISION ANALYSIS

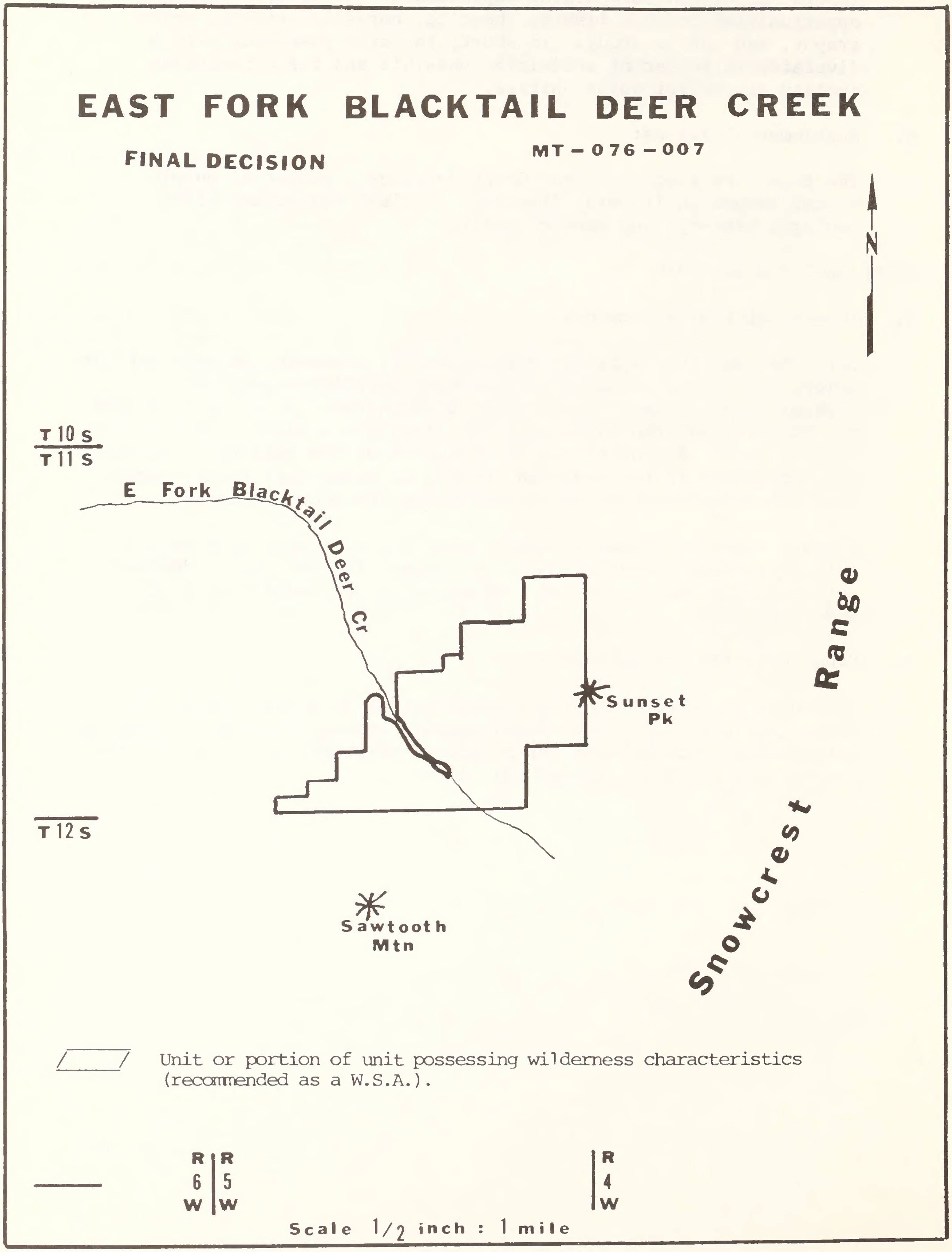
5. Summary of Public Comments:

This unit received a fairly high number of comments. A very definite majority of these comments were opposed to wilderness study. Several comments were concerned about wilderness study on this unit blocking access into National Forest land and a section of State of Montana land. A concern was expressed about the ability to manage big game herds in the area and locking up commercial forest lands. These concerns would be addressed during the study process.

A small number of comments agreed that the unit does possess suitable wilderness characteristics to warrant further study. Others felt that its small size and configuration precluded real wilderness potential.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

This unit is recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. It is of sufficient size, appears primarily natural, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and has supplemental values.



EAST FORK BLACKTAIL DEER CREEK

FINAL DECISION

MT – 076 – 007

Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-022

Unit Name Hidden Pasture Ck.

1. Physical Description:

Hidden Pasture Creek unit is located in the southern Tendoy Mountains, approximately 40 air miles west of Dillon, Montana. Access is obtained by exiting I-15 at Dell and following Big Sheep Creek road for six miles.

The intensive inventory determined that the vehicle way separating units 023, East Muddy Creek, and 022, Hidden Pasture Creek, did not meet the minimum qualifications of a "road". The two areas were combined into Inventory Unit 022. On the southern boundary a power corridor was excluded, removing approximately four acres. The revised boundary encloses 15,475 acres of public land, and 640 acres of State Land.

The unit is bordered to the south by Big Sheep Creek Road, to the west by private land and the Muddy Creek road, to the north by Forest Service land, and to the east by roads and private land.

2. Naturalness:

The unit is dominated by a series of high, steep ridges running north and south. Elevations range from 5,900 feet near the eastern boundary to 8,825 feet near the northern boundary. Approximately 15 percent of the roadless area supports small diverse forests of Douglas-fir, spruce, limber pine, and subalpine fir. Grassland and sage communities comprise the rest of the area. Mule deer, antelope, and elk are frequently seen in the unit.

The two most widespread human impacts in the area, 722 acres of contour furrowing and 9,840 acres of land sprayed with 2-4-D, are the least evident. No signs of either action are readily visible. Most of the 16 miles of vehicle ways are vegetated, and along with the 17 miles of fence, well screened by topographic relief. The localized impacts, an old log cabin, a stock water trough, spring developments, and an old mineral exploration site, are not noticeable from major portions of the area. Grazing occurs throughout the area, but is not substantially noticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

In the portions of the area steep hills and deep valleys combine with many side canyons and small timbered drainages to offer excellent opportunities to avoid unwanted contacts with other humans in the area.

Hidden Pasture Creek trail provides an exceptional sense of aloneness and isolation from the works of man. The diversity of topography and vegetation found in portions of this unit afford outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Numerous and diverse opportunities for primitive recreation are available in this unit, including hiking, bird watching, hunting, horseback riding, nature study and photography. Portions of the area offer opportunities for technical rock climbing. The topography is ideal for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. However, none of these opportunities could be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area was proposed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern to protect fisheries resources, big horn sheep habitat, possible wolf habitat, and riparian zones. The reintroduction of big horn sheep is currently being planned. An endangered species, the gray wolf, has been sighted several times in the area. The Muddy Creek Basin is proposed as in Area of Critical Environmental Concern for protection of archaeological resources. This ACEC study is scheduled to be done in FY80. Several lithic sites are located in the area.

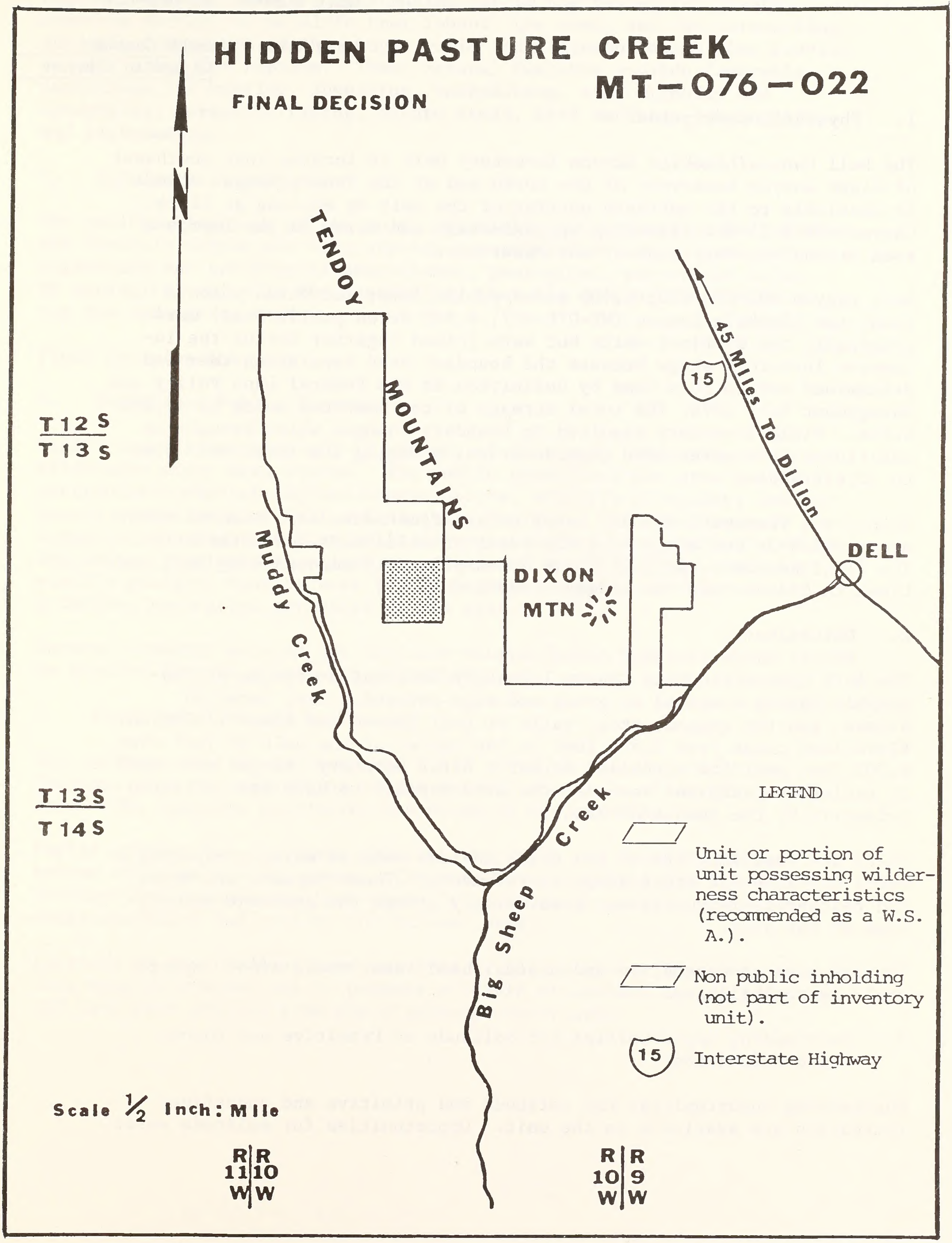
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

The overwhelming majority of comments supported the proposed decision. Many mentioned the wilderness characteristics, supplemental values and the fact that it is an integral part of the whole Tendoy Range. Many of the comments which disagreed with the proposed decision mentioned factors that will be looked at during the study phase, such as grazing potential.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

This area is primarily natural, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. It provides outstanding opportunities for solitude, and does have a diverse range of opportunities for primitive recreation, though they are not outstanding. The unit has unique supplemental values of sceintific, educational, and historic interest. This unit is recommended for further study.



HIDDEN PASTURE CREEK
MT-076-022
FINAL DECISION

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-026

Unit Name Bell Canyon/
Limekiln Canyon

1. Physical Description:

The Bell Canyon/Limekiln Canyon Inventory Unit is located just southwest of Clark Canyon Reservoir at the north end of the Tendoy Range. Access is available to the northern portion of the unit by exiting at Clark Canyon off I-15 and traveling approximately ten miles on the improved road around the west side of the reservoir.

Bell Canyon (MT-076-026; 8,400 acres public land; 160 acres private land) and Limekiln Canyon (MT-076-027; 8,520 acres public land) were originally two distinct units but were joined together during the intensive inventory stage because the boundary road separating them was determined not to be a road by definition in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976. The total acreage of the combined units is 17,080 acres. Field inventory resulted in boundary changes which brought an additional 5539 acres into consideration, bringing the total unit size to 22,619 acres.

Within the framework of this total area, adjustments were made to remove areas which do not qualify on the basis of wilderness characteristics. The final boundary enclosed 6,629 acres primarily encompassing Bell and Limekiln Canyons and the ridges between them.

2. Naturalness:

The Bell Canyon/Limekiln Canyon Inventory Unit has a diverse physiographic makeup composed of grass and sage covered hills, forested slopes, and the rugged, steep walls of Bell Canyon and Limekiln Canyon. Elevations range from 8,535 feet in the center of the unit to just over 6,000 feet near the northeast corner. After boundary changes were made to exclude significant impacts, the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

There are some imprints of man which include vehicle ways, prospects, a water pipeline and other range improvements. These impacts are minor and neither individually nor cumulatively affect the apparent naturalness of the area.

Through natural vegetation and minimal hand labor these minor impacts could be rehabilitated.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are available in the unit. Opportunities for solitude exist because of the topographic diversity, especially in the deep, rugged canyons, and the vegetative cover in the dense forest stands. Recreation opportunities are outstanding due to the varied topography, numerous species of wildlife that inhabit the area, and the interesting geologic formations of the canyon walls and ridgetops which also provide nesting sites for raptors. These natural features provide favorable conditions for hunting, dayhiking, backpacking, rock climbing and scrambling, horseback riding, nature study, bird watching, photography, and sightseeing.

4. Supplemental Values:

The geologic features of the unit, especially those found in Bell Canyon and Limekiln Canyon not only provide opportunities for solitude and recreation but are also of educational, geological, and scenic value. Of ecological value is the possibility that the unit provides habitat for the endangered wolf.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Public comment was strongly in support of this unit being returned to wilderness study area status. The public considered the area natural, particularly emphasizing the scenic beauty, wildlife diversity, and apparent naturalness of Bell and Limekiln Canyons. Comments strongly supported the position that solitude opportunities were available within the unit. Supplemental values of unique and scenic geology, and high quality wildlife habitat were listed as being a positive value to the primitive recreation potential of the area.

Several comments pointed out that the entire Tendoy Mountain range should be studied for its wilderness potential.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The decision will be to recommend 6,629 acres of Bell and Limekiln Canyons, plus the connecting ridges between them as a wilderness study area. The specific boundaries are shown on the attached map.

Public comment has expressed interest that Bell and Limekiln Canyon become wilderness study areas. Comments have augmented the intensive inventory recommendation that these two canyons do possess wilderness characteristics and quality for further study.

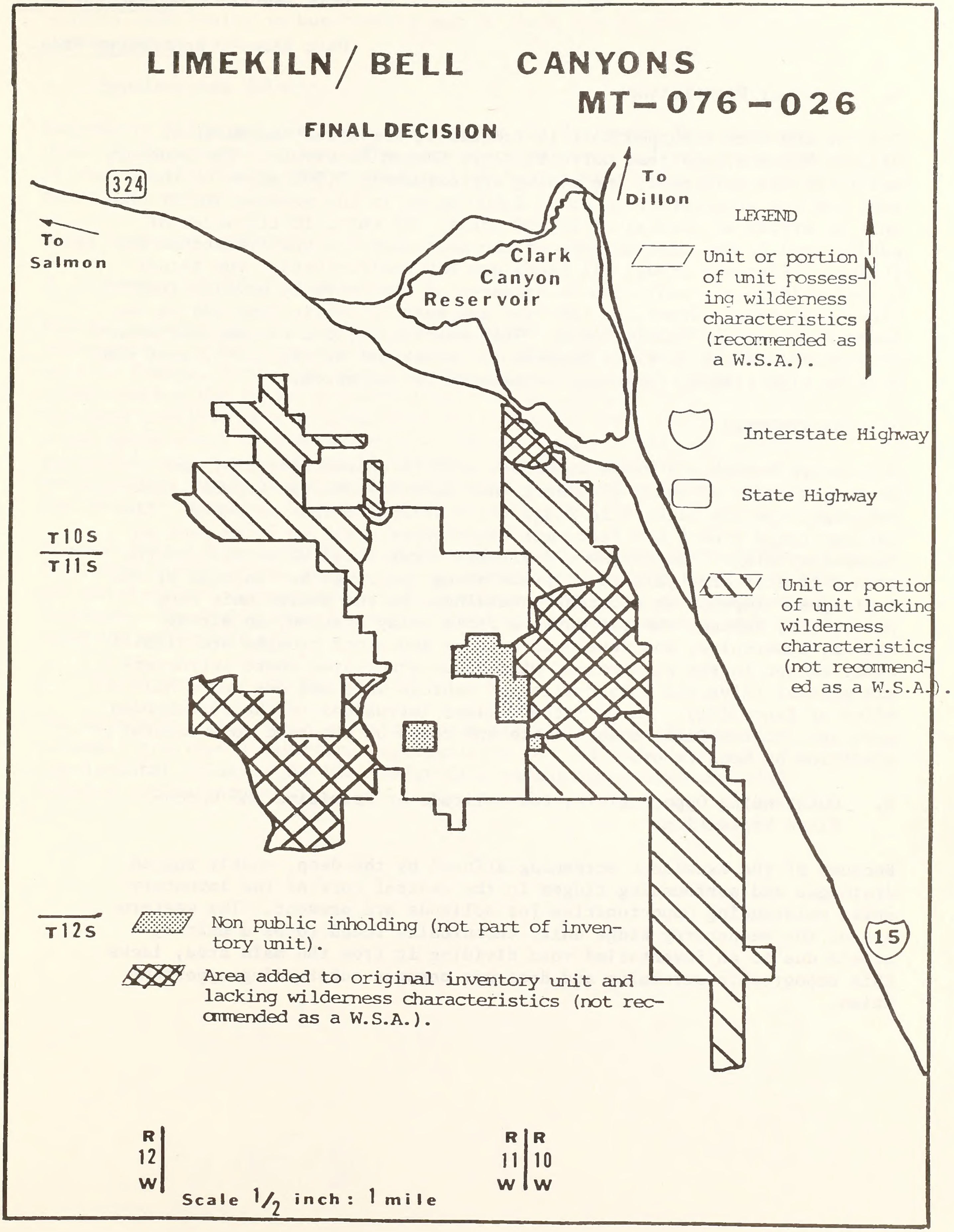
Portions of the roadless area surveyed by the intensive inventory team have been determined not to possess suitable wilderness characteristics and have been deleted from the wilderness study area.

The eastern edge from near Clark Canyon Reservoir, south to Kelmheck Canyon in the Tendoy Mountains has been deleted. This area contains numberous man-made impacts (powerlines, vehicle ways, fences, ditches, a reservoir, and water developments). The accumulative effect of these non-natural impacts is substantially noticeable. The visibility is heightened by open, flat topography and the absence of vegetative screening. The combination of factors precludes this area from further wilderness consideration and thus is recommended to be excluded from the unit.

A portion in the extreme southwest corner of the inventory unit has also been deleted. The north-south ridge road in T. 11 S., R. 11 W., Sections 15 and 22 has been constructed, maintained and used in places along its length, especially when rounding steeper hillsides. This segment of the vehicle way appears to meet, or come very close to meeting, the road definition in the Inventory Handbook. This isolates a less than 5000 acre segment of the unit removing it from further consideration. This road segment now becomes a boundary road.

Another extension of the unit to the northwest is also being deleted. This area contains several irregular boundary extensions and narrow necks from ¼ to ½ mile wide. This narrow, irregular configuration greatly diminishes of opportunities for solitude and with the existance of man-made impacts of vehicle ways, fences, water developments, pipelines and powerlines. The wilderness characteristics are significantly impacted. The new boundary departs from the public land boundary in T. 10 S., R. 11 W., Section 35 by following the radio tower road southwest to the vicinity of the radio towers, thence south along a vehicle way to the ridge top. It then continues southerly along this ridgetop to the public land boundary again in T. 11 S., R. 11 W., Section 3, SW corner.

The 6,629 acre wilderness study area contains the hearts of Bell and Limekiln Canyons and the adjacent slopes and ridges. The unit has unquestionable wilderness characteristics to warrant further study.


LIMEKILN/BELL CANYONS
MT-076-026
FINAL DECISION
324
To Salmon
To Dillon
Clark Canyon Reservoir
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
N
Interstate Highway
State Highway
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
T10S
T11S
T12S
15
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
R 12 W
R 11 W
R 10 W
Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-028

Unit Name Henneberry Ridge

1. Physical Description:

This 32,400 acre U-shaped unit is located 12 air miles southwest of Dillon, Montana, and just north of Clark Canyon Reservoir. Two boundary modifications were made, one adding approximately 5,300 acres to the east and the other dropping about 5,800 acres in the western arm of the unit to arrive at a total of 31,900 acres. Of this, 10,111 acres of public land in the central core of the unit meet the qualifications for further wilderness study; all lands are BLM administered. The recommended wilderness study area is bordered on the north by private land along Grasshopper Creek, on the west and east by public land and on the south by State and public lands. Topographically, the recommended area is bordered on the north by Grasshopper Creek and on the south, west and east by high ridges, including Henneberry to the south.

2. Naturalness

The entire Henneberry Ridge inventory unit is characterized by deep drainages (most of which flow northward into Grasshopper Creek), rocky outcrops, and the eight mile ridge after which the unit is named. Elevations range from 5,400 feet near Grasshopper Creek to 7,587 feet on Henneberry Ridge. Sagebrush and grasses cover about 90 percent of the area with scattered patches of trees along the ridge and in some of the drainages. Impacts on apparent naturalness to the entire unit from powerlines, fences, vehicle ways, a radio relay station, an airway beacon, reservoirs, and developed springs and stock troughs are significant, except in the recommended wilderness study area where intrusions are minimal (five and a half miles of vehicle ways and one and a half miles of fenceline). These latter, minor intrusions in the recommended area are substantially unnoticeable and could be returned to a natural condition by hand labor.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Because of the excellent screening affored by the deep, mostly rugged drainages and surrounding ridges in the central core of the inventory unit, outstanding opportunities for solitude are present. The western arm of the Henneberry Ridge unit, technically found to be a unit by itself due to an inventoried road dividing it from the main area, lacks this topographic screening and does not possess outstanding opportunities.

Primitive recreation opportunities throughout the entire unit are not outstanding, although the area does possess certain opportunities such as hiking, backpacking, and bird watching. No single primitive recreation opportunity is outstanding nor is there enough diversity to be considered as such.

4. Supplemental Values:

Henneberry Ridge and the drainages leading off it toward Grasshopper Creek do have scenic value. The area also possesses a large population of raptors, including golden eagles, that have educational and possibly scientific value.

Final Decision Analysis

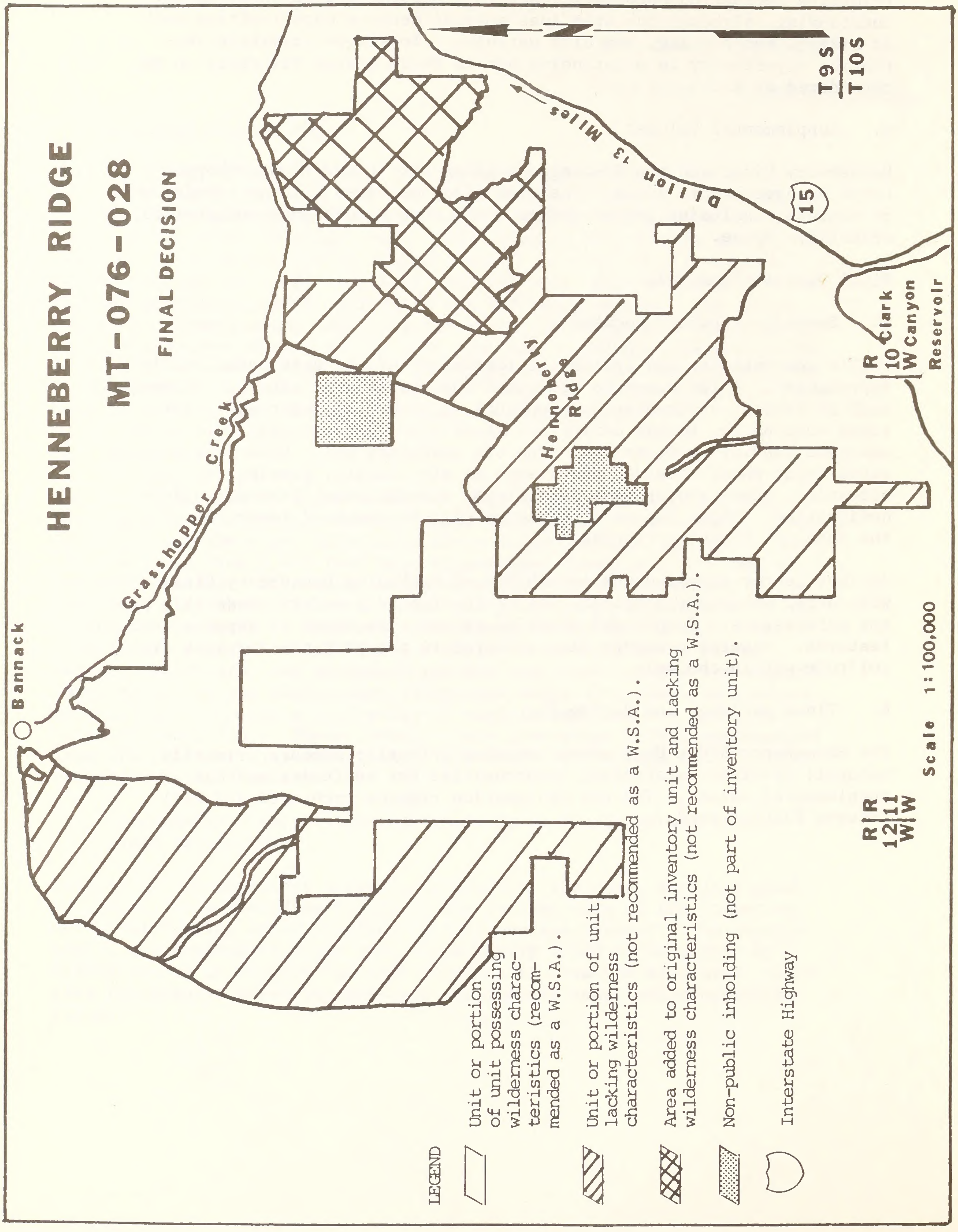
5. Summary of Public Comments:

Public comments for and against further study of the unit were equally represented. A few comments addressed the presence of natural impacts such as fences, stockwater developments, a powerline and roads. All roads meeting the Bureau definition as well as substantially noticeable man-made imprints were removed from the inventory unt. Other comments sited study phase considerations such as air quality, grazing, mineral potential, state and private inholdings, and the possiblity of an ACEC designation. These important concerns will be assessed later through the Bureau's Planning Process.

Another letter stressed the possiblity of combining Henneberry Ridge with other surrounding units. Due to identified boundary roads this was not permissable. Scenic and wildlife values were cited as supplemental features. Several comments also referred to the presence and lack of solitude within the unit.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Henneberry Ridge Unit meets the size criteria; appears primarily natural; provides outstanding opportunities for solitude; and has supplemental values. The WSA designation remains unchanged and will receive further study.


HENNEBERRY RIDGE
MT-076-028
FINAL DECISION
Bannack
Grasshopper Creek
Henneberry Ridge
Dillon 13 Miles
15
T9S
T10S
R 10 W
Clark Canyon Reservoir
R 12 W
R 11 W
Scale 1:100,000
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non-public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-034

Unit Name Farlin Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Farlin Creek Inventory Unit is located one and one-half miles southeast of Polaris, Montana on the western side of the Pioneer Mountains. Public access is via a dirt road heading up Farlin Creek behind the Polaris school site. The unit is bounded to the north, west, and south by private land, and to the east by public land administered by the USDA Forest Service. The unit's boundary originally enclosed 1,340 roadless acres, all of which are public land. A boundary change was made eliminating 80 acres from the narrow, southern finger, resulting in a total acreage of 1,260 acres. The unit is contiguous to the Forest Service RARE II Area 01-008, East Pioneers, of 93,859 roadless acres which was recommended for wilderness. The combined acreage of the Farlin Creek Inventory Unit and the RARE II Area, East Pioneers, would be 95,119 roadless acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Farlin Creek Inventory Unit appears to be predominantly natural in character. It ranges in elevation from 6,480' to 7,760', transected by two drainages. Half of the unit is covered by coniferous forest with the remainder being primarily sagebrush-grassland. There remain imprints of previous human activity on the unit, all of a relatively minor nature. These imprints are in the forms of vehicular ways, mining activity, and evidence of an old, selective timber harvest. Neither singly nor cumulatively are any of the impacts significant or distracting from the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Farlin Creek offers outstanding opportunities for solitude. The two drainages aid in visitor use dispersal and enable isolation. The vegetation is not so dense as to restrict use, but accentuates the opportunities for privacy and solitude.

Those primitive and unconfined types of recreation best suited for this area are hiking, backpacking, hunting, photography, and nature study. However, these opportunities are only of a moderate quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

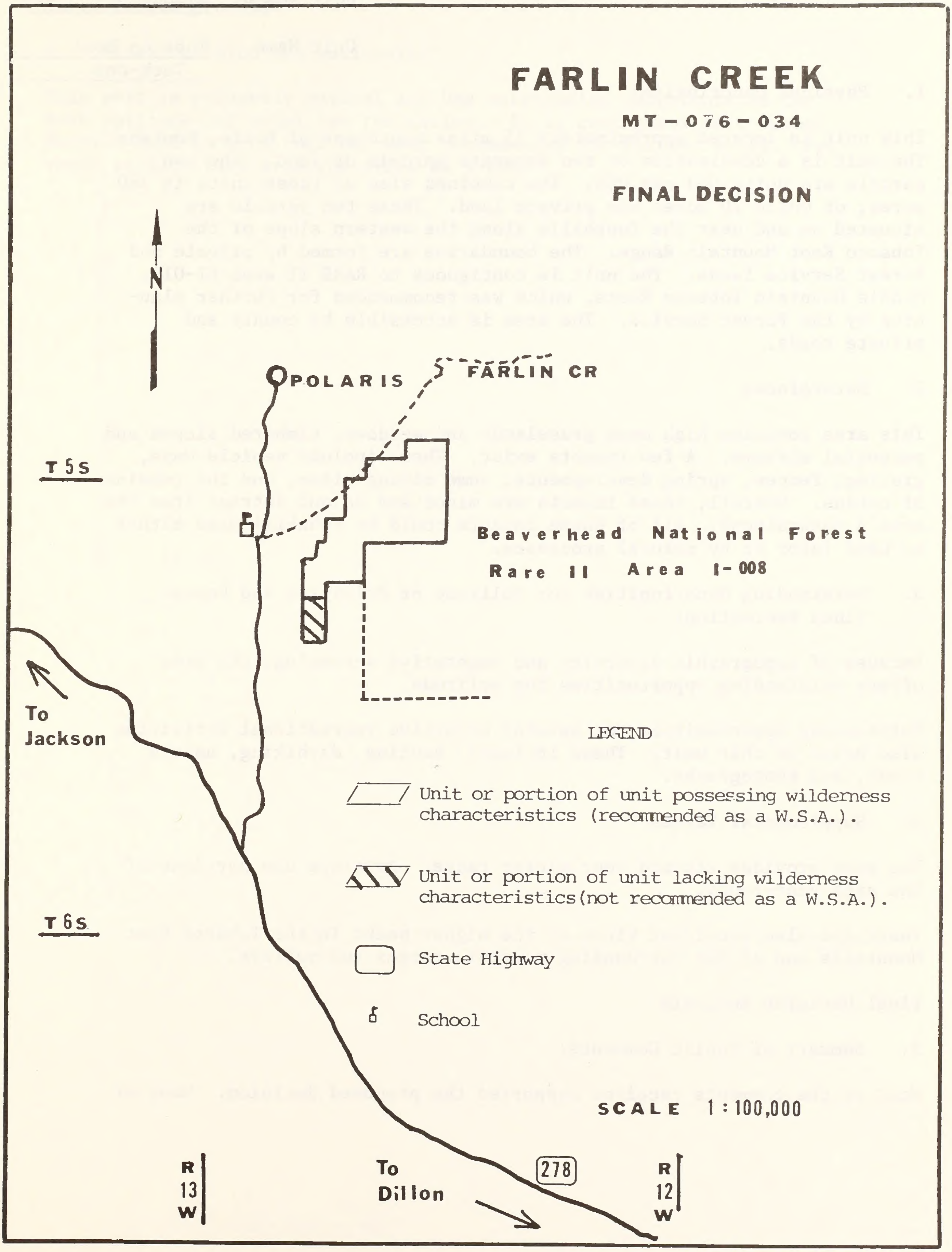
The Farlin Creek Inventory Unit supports populations of deer, blue and sagegrouse, in addition to several non-game species.

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Numerous comments were received that either supported or disagreed with the BLM's decision without talking about wilderness characteristics. Many other comments addressed study phase considerations such as mineral potential, timber potential, grazing potential, etc. These considerations will be addressed during the study phase.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Farlin Creek Unit is recommended for further study as a WSA. Its contiguity to the RARE II Area, East Pioneers, creates an area of 95,119 roadless acres. It is apparently natural in character and provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The unit also provides critical habitat for deer and other wildlife.


FARLIN CREEK
MT-076-034
FINAL DECISION
N
POLARIS
FARLIN CR
T 5 S
Beaverhead National Forest
Rare II Area 1-008
To Jackson
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
State Highway
School
T 6 S
SCALE 1:100,000
R 13 W
To Dillon
278
R 12 W

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTIC NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-063

Unit Name Tobacco Root
Tack-ons

1. Physical Description:

This unit is located approximately 25 miles southeast of Butte, Montana The unit is a combination of two separate parcels of land. The two parcels are units 063 and 064. The combined size of these units is 880 acres, of which 20 acres are private land. These two parcels are situated on and near the foothills along the western slope of the Tobacco Root Mountain Range. The boundaries are formed by private and Forest Service lands. The unit is contiguous to RARE II area B1-013, Middle Mountain Tobacco Roots, which was recommended for further planning by the Forest Service. The area is accessible by county and private roads.

2. Naturalness

This area contains high open grasslands and meadows, timbered slopes and perennial streams. A few impacts exist. These include vehicle ways, grazing, fences, spring developments, some mining sites, and the remains of cabins. Overall, these impacts are minor and do not detract from the area's naturalness. All of these impacts could be rehabilitated either by hand labor or by natural processes.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Because of topographic diversity and vegetative screening, the area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Outstanding opportunities for several primitive recreational activities also exist in this unit. These include: hunting, dayhiking, nature study, and photography.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area provides elk and deer winter range. Antelope use portions of the area year-round.

There are also excellent views of the higher peaks in the Tobacco Root Mountains and of the surrounding mountain ranges and valleys.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Most of the comments received supported the proposed decision. Many of those that did not, mentioned study phase consideration such as mineral potential, timber values or grazing values. These will be considered later in the process.

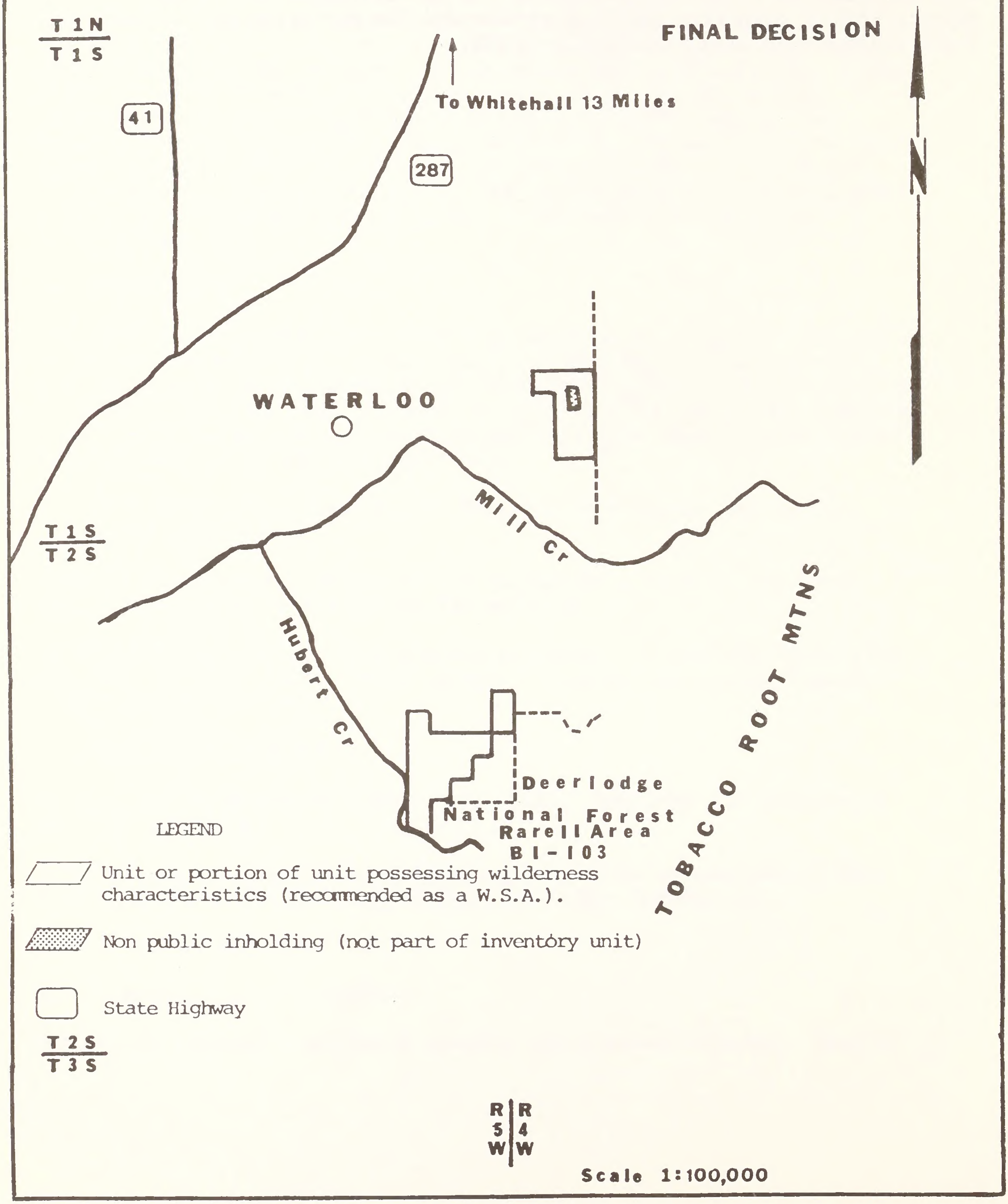
6. Final Decision and Rationale:

This unit is primarily natural and has outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation. It is contiguous to a Forest Service RARE II area that has been recommended for further study. For these reasons this area qualifies as a WSA.

TOBACCO ROOT TACK-ONS WEST

MT-076-063

FINAL DECISION



Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-069

Unit Name Axolotl Lakes

1. Physical Description:

The Axolotl Lakes inventory unit is at the northern end of the Gravelly Mountain Range, three miles south of Virginia City, Montana. Access is via county road out of Virginia City.

The unit is bounded by Forest Service land to the south, patented mining claims to the west, a county road and private land to the north, and private land to the east.

Two boundary revisions have been made to the initial inventory unit boundary. A county road crosses the northern end of the north-eastern extension of the unit. This becomes the unit boundary. The second boundary revision runs along the southern boundary of Section 12, T7S, R3W.

These changes reduce the original size from 7,444 acres to the recommended wilderness study area size of 6,578 acres.

2. Naturalness:

Meadow-forest mosaics, timbered slopes, rock cliffs, lakes, alpine ridges, aspen groves and large, high country meadows are some of the many striking "types" of land present in this unit. The unusual diversity of ecosystems represented here provides a wide range of habitat for many species of flora and fauna, including the unique axolotl salamander.

Human impacts are present within this unit; they include fences, vehicle ways, a few historical structures, mineral exploration sites, water improvements and grazing.

Most significant of these impacts is the presence of approximately 20 miles of vehicle ways, most of which occur in the open lake country. Of this mileage, over two-thirds consists of lightly impacted ways that are infrequently used. The effective revegetation of one vehicle way, which was fenced off in 1976, attests to the unit's ability to return such impacted areas to a natural condition in a relatively short time after use is discontinued.

The outstanding degree of topographic and vegetative diversity of this unit acts to reinforce the sense of naturalness within the area and diminish the significance of man's impacts. As a result, the area appears to be primarily affected by the forces of nature.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude are present throughout this unit. Secluded game trails, quiet vantage points and isolated meadows provide some of the many possibilities to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the area. The diversity of landforms and vegetation is the key reason why these opportunities for solitude are outstanding.

The area also offers a wide range of primitive recreation opportunities, including hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, photography, nature study, and horseback riding. The area is excellent for winter recreation activities such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. The quality and quantity of opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation in this unit are outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

The axolotl salamander, perhaps the most curious supplemental feature of this area, is listed as "a species of special interest or concern" by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The area contains archaeological sites and is suspected of being a center of prehistoric cultural activity. Recent historical artifacts include rock kilns, log cabins, and an old stone building that was constructed in the late 1800's.

The outstanding diversity of ecosystems in the unit qualify it as an ideal outdoor scientific laboratory. Nine hundred and sixty acres of this area are listed in the National Directory of Research Natural Areas on Federal Land. However, no designations, withdrawals, or official actions have been taken.

FINAL DECISION ANALYSIS

5. Summary of Public Comments:

A rather large volume of comments were addressed to this unit. Decision-related comments were evenly split in favor of and opposing further study.

Several comments pointed out that adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands in the Gravelly Range were of similar character to the Axolotl Lakes unit and were not being considered for wilderness.

Past effects of mining and future impacts expected from mining were discussed at length in several comments. The northwestern portion of the unit has been deleted because of mining impacts, and during the study process, other areas adjacent to Alder Gulch will be looked at in detail to address the mining impacts and appropriate boundaries.

Conflicts between wilderness, logging potential, livestock use, and current recreation practices were brought up in numerous comments. These conflicts are recognized and will be addressed during the study process.

Comments relating to wilderness characteristics were varied, with comments pointing out the presence and absence of specific characteristics. It can only be concluded that opinions vary as to the wilderness potential of this unit.

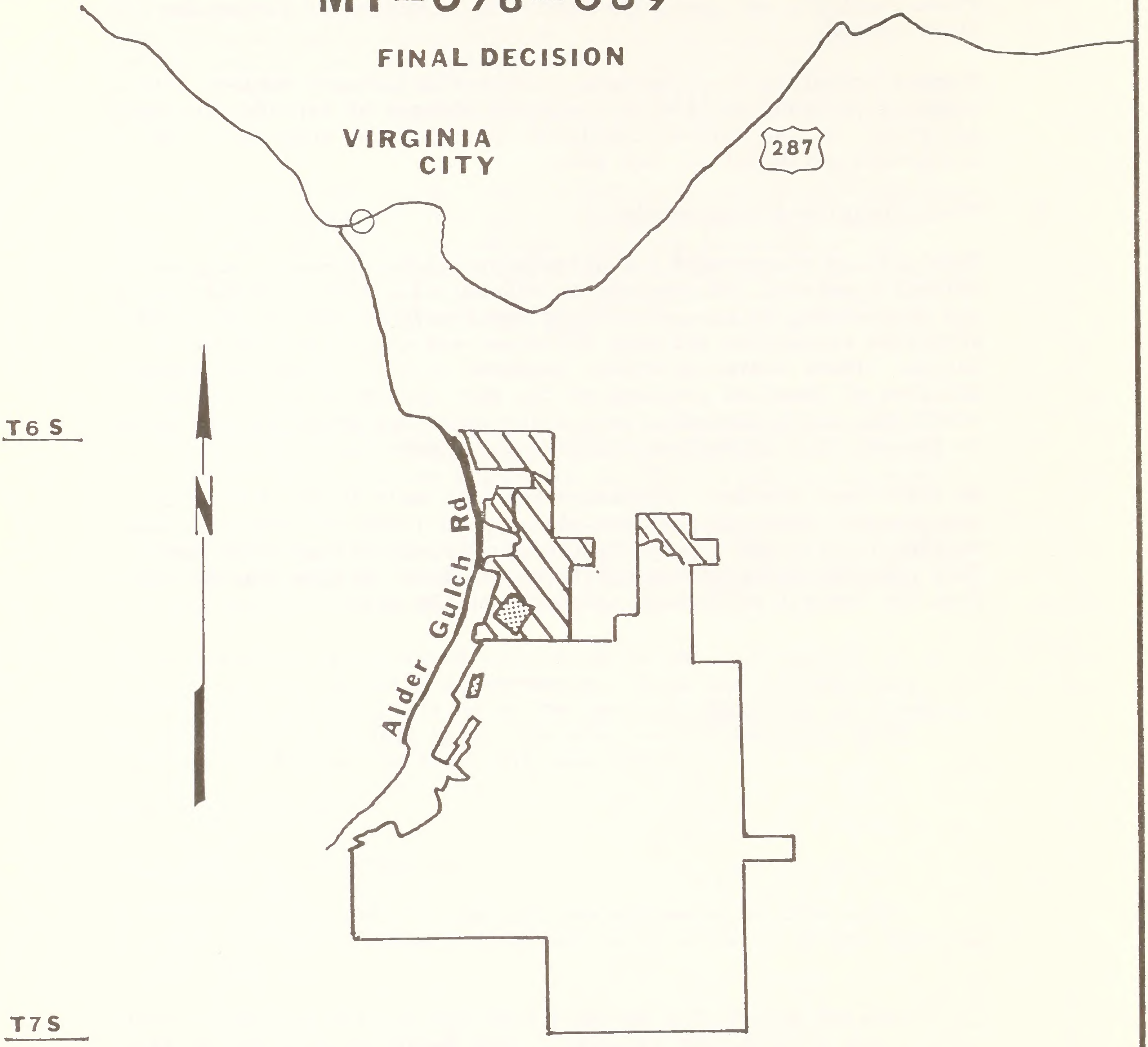
6. Final Decision and Rationale:

This unit is recommended for wilderness study. The area remains primarily natural, it displays an unusual diversity of landforms and ecosystems, it has outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and many different and unique supplemental values. These characteristics, combined with the excellent possibilities of impacted portions of the area returning to a natural condition, merit that this area receive further study for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system.

An additional boundary adjustment has been made in the far northwest corner, removing portions of Sections 1 and 12, T7S, R3W, and Section 7, T7S, R2W, from inclusion in the wilderness study area. This adjustment excludes significant man-made impacts that detract from the overall wilderness character of the unit.

AXOLOTL LAKES
MT-076-069

FINAL DECISION



LEGEND

▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (non recommended as a W.S.A.).

░ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

⛉ U.S. Highway

R 3 W | R 2 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-079

Unit Name Madison Tack-ons

1. Physical Description:

The Madison Tack-ons Inventory Unit was initially comprised of five parcels of land and were previously considered as five separate units. Those units were: MT-076-079, Corral Creek; MT-076-080, Wolf Creek; MT-076-081, Wolf Creek South; MT-076-082, Bad Luck Creek; and MT-076-084; Trout Creek.

Unit MT-076-081, Wolf Creek South was removed from further consideration due to a revised administration change. The area was rejected due to its small size and lack of outstanding opportunities.

The combined acreage of these four remaining parcels creates a unit of 1,469 acres. The unit lies along the western slopes of the Madison Range in the extreme southeast corner of the Beaverhead National Forest boundary. Access is via private property east of State Highway 287.

The boundaries of these parcels are formed by both public and private lands. Two boundary changes were made eliminating eleven acres. The resulting acreage is 1,549 roadless acres. All parcels of the unit are contiguous to the USDA Forest Service, RARE II Area S1-549, Madison South, of 42,959 roadless acres. This area was recommended for further planning. The combined acreage of the Madison Tack-ons unit and the RARE II Area, Madison South, would be 44,479 roadless acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Madison Tack-ons unit is of a natural character with no evidence of human activity. The elevation ranges from 6600' to 8947'. Vegetative cover varies from sagebrush grassland to coniferous forest with aspen stands. Two of the original parcels had imprints of significant consequence which were removed by boundary changes. The Corral Creek parcel had a guest cabin, outhouse, and dilapidated, old cabin just inside the boundary in its northeast corner which was excluded. A boundary change was also made on the Wolf Creek parcel to correspond with the existence of a road in its southeast portion. The remaining land of both parcels is as untouched as the other three parcels.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are offered within the Madison Tack-ons Inventory Unit. Various drainages on the parcels enable visitor use dispersal throughout the unit. The distribution of coniferous and aspen stands further enhance the potential for visitors to screen themselves and feel isolated. Excellent opportunities exist for hiking, backpacking, photography, hunting, and with favorable snow conditions, cross-country skiing on the unit.

4. Supplemental Values:

All parcels of the unit are known to provide critical range for deer and elk, and one parcel supports bighorn sheep.

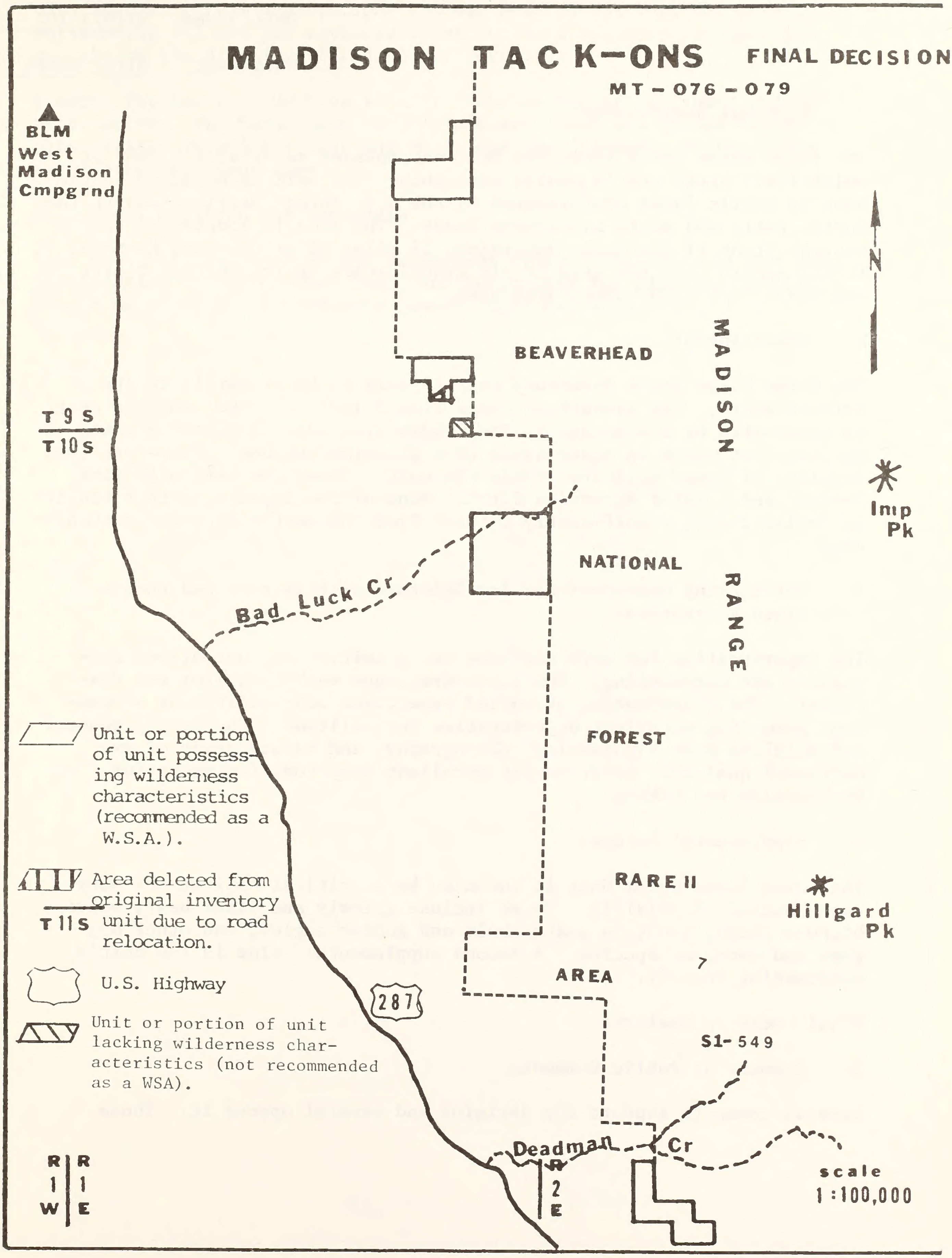
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Most of the comments received supported the unit for further study. They stressed the area's naturalness and wildlife values. The few comments which opposed the Bureau's findings mentioned study phase considerations such as grazing, land exchanges possiblities, merchantable timber and mineral potential. These considerations will be assessed during the study phase.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Madison Tack-ons Inventory Unit is recommended for further study as a WSA. Its contiguity to the Forest Service RARE II Area, Madison South, creates an area of 44,428 roadless acres. The unit is essentially natural in character, and offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit also provides critical habitat for deer, elk, and bighorn sheep.



MADISON TACK-ONS FINAL DECISION

MT-076-079

BLM
West
Madison
Cmpgrnd
T 9 S
T 10 S
T 11 S
Bad Luck Cr
BEAVERHEAD
NATIONAL
FOREST
MADISON RANGE
RARE II
AREA
7
Imp Pk
Hillgard Pk
N
287
S1-549
Deadman Cr
R 1 W
R 1 E
R 2 E
scale
1:100,000
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
U.S. Highway
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a WSA).

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-102

Unit Name Blind Horse Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Blind Horse Creek Inventory Unit encompasses an area of 5,080, of which 4,927 acres are in public ownership. The unit is bordered to the west by public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, and to the north, east, and south by private lands. The area is located on the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains, 25 miles NE of Choteau, Montana. Public access into the area is via gravel roads up the Chicken Coulee and Clark Fork Muddy Creek drainages.

2. Naturalness:

The Blind Horse Creek Inventory Unit appears to be primarily in its natural state. The elevations range from 5,100' to 7,000' and the unit is transected by 3 drainages. The vegetative cover is dense in some patches, but opens in other areas to a grassland meadow. There are some imprints of human activity within the unit. These are vehicular ways, fences, and a water diversion ditch. None of the impacts, either singly or collectively, significantly detract from the unit's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are outstanding. The three drainages enable visitor use dispersal. The distribution of varied vegetation adds additional screening, promoting excellent opportunities for solitude. The unit's scenery and wildlife make sightseeing, photography, and nature study of exceptional quality. Additionally excellent opportunities exist for backpacking and hiking.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Blind Horse Creek Unit is known to be a critical habitat for many rare species of wildlife. These include grizzly and black bear, wolves, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, bald and golden eagles, and other big game and non-game species. A second supplemental value is the unit's outstanding scenery.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

Several comments support the decision and several oppose it. Those opposed cited the evidence of man's imprint as justification to exclude it. These are: fence, road, water pipelines, deep ruts and seismic pits resulting from exploration. It was pointed out that the area has outstanding oil and gas potential, has not been assessed for minerals, and abutts the Blackleaf field to the north.

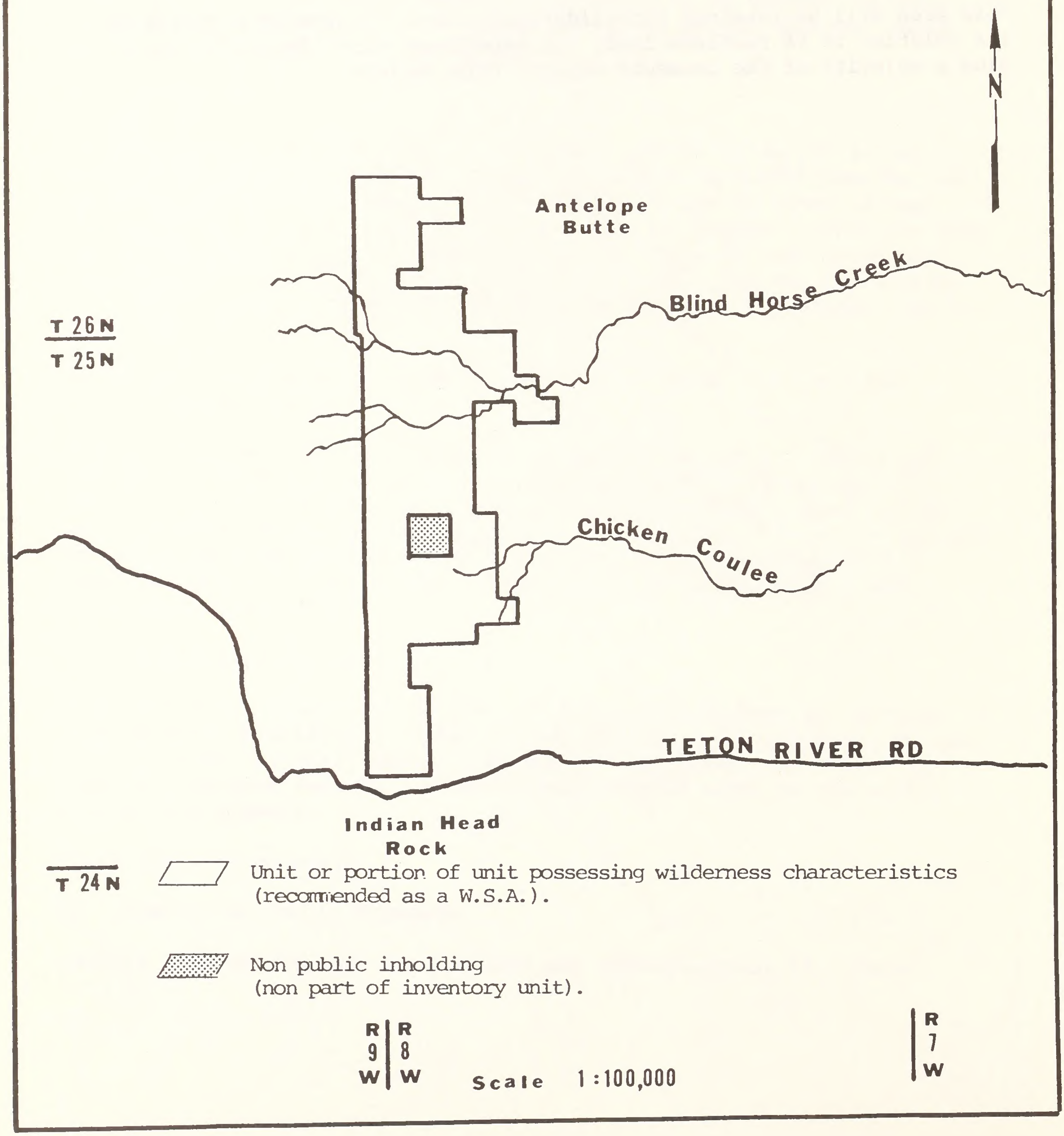
Reasons for leaving the area in are: habitat for grizzly bear and black bear, wolves, big horn sheep, mountain goats, bald and golden eagles plus sitings of grizzly bear and wolf, and the discovery of the first carnivorous dinosaur eggs.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

This area will be retained for wilderness study. Character of the area, its relation to FS roadless land, and importance for wildlife habitat, plus a majority of the comments support this decision.

BLIND HORSE CREEK FINAL DECISION

MT-075-102



▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

▨ Non public inholding (non part of inventory unit).

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-105

Unit Name Chute Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Chute Mountain Inventory Unit is located in the east front of the Rocky Mountains approximately twenty-four miles west of Choteau, Montana. Access is available on the west through the Lewis and Clark National Forest or on the east through private land with permission of the owner.

The unit consists of 3,085 acres of public land. Boundaries on the north, east, and south are formed by private land and on the west by National Forest land. The western boundary is contiguous with the Forest Service RARE II area P1-485 (Bear-Marshall-Scopegoat-Swan), 26,068 acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Chute Mountain Inventory Unit is part of the Rocky Mountain Front, a unique area where the mountains rise abruptly from the plains. Dominant features within the unit are the steep eastern slopes of Chute Mountain and the North Fork of Deep Creek which forms a steep sided canyon through the southwest portion of the unit. The majority of the unit is forested with Douglas fir and Limber Pine and there are some interspersed rock outcroppings and open grass areas.

The unit appears to be in a natural condition and to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There are some minor impacts which include one vehicle way and the remains of some linear clearings on the east slope of Chute Mountain that were utilized as log chutes during the early 1900's. These impacts show signs of revegetation and do not significantly deter from the apparent naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Chute Mountain Inventory Unit by itself and also in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The forested areas and varied terrain found throughout the unit provide a high degree of vegetative or a topographic screening which makes it very easy to find a secluded spot.

The wide range of wildlife species that inhabit the unit and vicinity provide outstanding opportunities for hunting, wildlife observation and bird watching. The combination of the interesting geologic and zoologic features provide outstanding opportunities for nature study and photography, and also enhance the day hiking and backpacking opportunities. The inventory unit offers both a variety of recreational opportunities as well as several high quality ones.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unique geology of the Rocky Mountain Front is of significant scientific and scenic value. The variety of wildlife that inhabit the unit and contiguous RARE II area including the rare and endangered grizzly bear and wolf, are of significant ecological value. Of historic value are the log chutes located on the eastern slope of Chute Mountain that were constructed in the early 1900's.

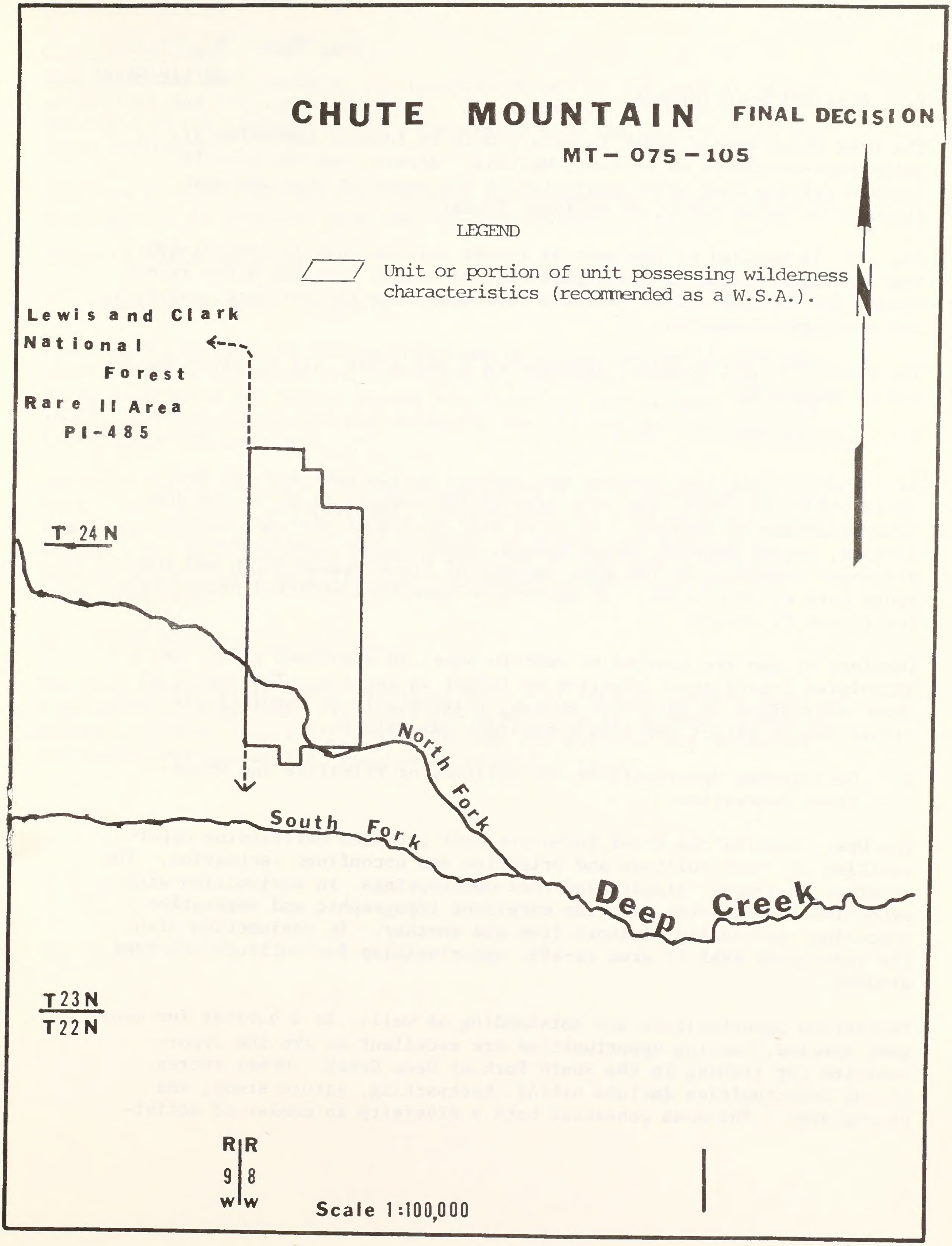
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

Public comment supports study of this area by 2 to 1. Several comments addressed the presence of timber, grazing leases and oil and gas leases. Seismic work and ORV use has left pits and rutts. Some indicated siting numerous grizzly bear, mountain goat, and wolf. Several cited the area as valuable for hunting, especially when used in conjunction with adjacent Forest Service land.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

This area will be retained for wilderness study. Comments received and values found in the area support this decision.



CHUTE MOUNTAIN FINAL DECISION

MT–075–105

LEGEND

▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-106

Unit Name Deep Creek/ Battle Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Deep Creek/Battle Creek Inventory Unit is located approximately 22 miles west-southwest of Choteau, Montana. Access from the east is through private land with permission of the owner or from the west through the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

The unit is bounded on the west by Forest Service RARE II area A1-485, Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan (partial), of 14,250 roadless acres recommended for further study. Private land comprises the northern, eastern, and southern boundaries.

The inventory unit boundary encompasses 3,086 acres, all of which are in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

As a transitional zone between the prairie to the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west, the unit lies on the eastern slope of the dominant mountainous terrain. It is an area of limber pine and spruce forests, grassy meadows, talus slopes, sheer cliffs, and numerous drainages dominated by the deep canyons of Green Timber Gulch and the South Fork of Deep Creek. It appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Imprints of man are limited to vehicle ways, an abandoned cabin, and a disjointed 2-inch steel pipeline no longer in service. The impact of these intrusions is not great enough, individually or cumulatively, to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Deep Creek/Battle Creek Inventory Unit provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The numerous drainages, ridges, and rock outcroppings, in conjunction with extensive forest cover, provide excellent topographic and vegetative screening, separating visitors from one another. In conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area A1-485, opportunities for solitude are even greater.

Recreation opportunities are outstanding as well. As a habitat for many game species, hunting opportunities are excellent as are the opportunities for fishing in the South Fork of Deep Creek. Other recreational opportunities include hiking, backpacking, nature study, and photography. The area possesses both a diversity in number of activities the outstanding quality of several opportunities. In conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area A1-485, opportunities for recreation increase substantially.

4. Supplemental Values:

The inventory unit contains supplemental values in the form of unique geological and ecological features. The landscape exhibits visible evidence of the geologic history associated with the uplifting of the Rocky Mountains.

The area provides habitat for the rare and endangered grizzly bear and wolf as well as numerous game and non-game species.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

One family stressed the detrimental impacts wilderness would place on their ranching operation and specifically, expressed concern about reduced allotments and public access complications across their private lands. Several emphasized the potential for oil and gas discoveries within this WSA boundary.

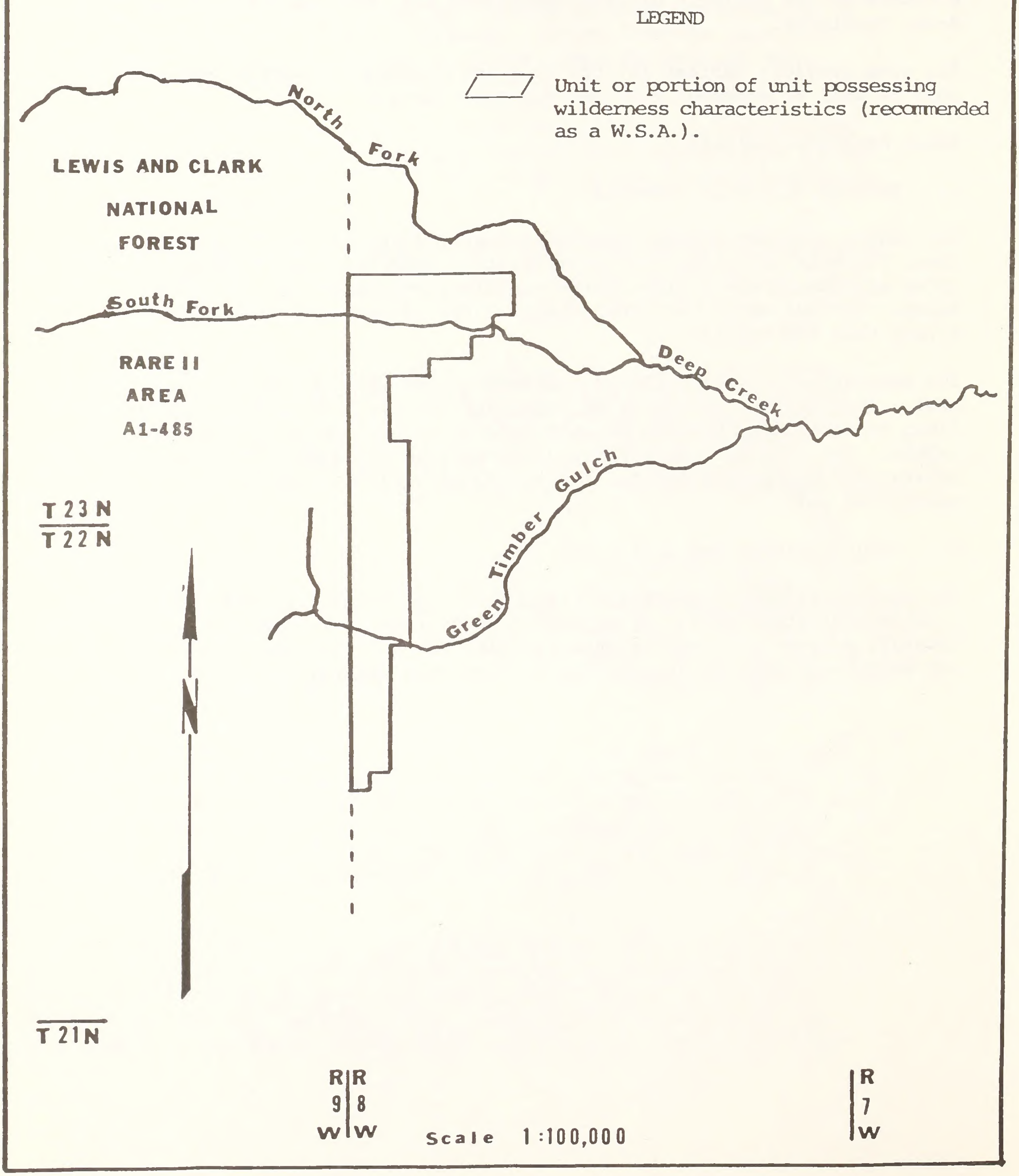
The majority of comments favored wilderness for this primarily natural unit. They pointed out existing opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation as well as the presence of scenic and geological values. The most prevalent convern referred to the area's existing habitat for big game wildlife, the threatened grizzly bear and the endangered wolf.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

The Deep Creek/Battle Creek Inventory Unit will receive further study as a wilderness study area. It meets the size criteria, appears primarily natural, possess outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and has supplemental values.

FINAL DECISION

DEEP CREEK/BATTLE CREEK
MT-075-106



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-107

Unit Name North Fork of Sun River

1. Physical Description:

The North Fork of Sun River Inventory Unit is located approximately twenty four miles southwest of Choteau and eighteen miles northwest of Augusta, Montana. Access from the east is through private lands with permission from the owner or from the west through the Lewis and Clark National Forest.

The unit is bounded on the west by Forest Service RARE II Area A1-485, Bear-Marshall-Scapegoat-Swan, totaling 14,250 roadless acres recommended for further study. The north, south and east boundaries are adjacent to private lands.

The inventory unit boundary encloses 196 acres, all of which are in public ownership. The unit is roughly rectangular, measuring one mile west to east and one quarter to one half mile north to south.

2. Naturalness:

The unit lies within the transitional zone between the prairies to the east and the Rocky Mountains to the west at an elevation of approximately 5,200 feet. It is an area of gentle foothills slopes of grass and scattered limber pines. It contains two converging drainages with four associated ponds, riparian plant communities and aspen stands. It appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Imprints of man are limited to a quarter mile vehicle way and two associated spurs. This impact is not great enough to significantly affect the apparent naturalness of the area.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreational activities can only be considered outstanding in conjunction with the RARE II Area A1-485. Opportunities are limited within the unit due to its small size and lack of topographic screening. However, when considered as an addition to the adjoining RARE II Area, the solitude is outstanding due to the character and increased area over which visitors could be dispersed.

Recreation activities provided by the unit include big game hunting, horseback riding, nature study and photography. The opportunities along with day hiking and backpacking can only be considered excellent when appraised in conjunction with the RARE II Area.

4. Supplemental Values:

Ecological, scenic and scientific values are available in the unit due to its habitat for the threatened grizzly bear and endangered wolf, populations of game and non-game animals and views of the Rocky Mountains.

Final Decision Analysis

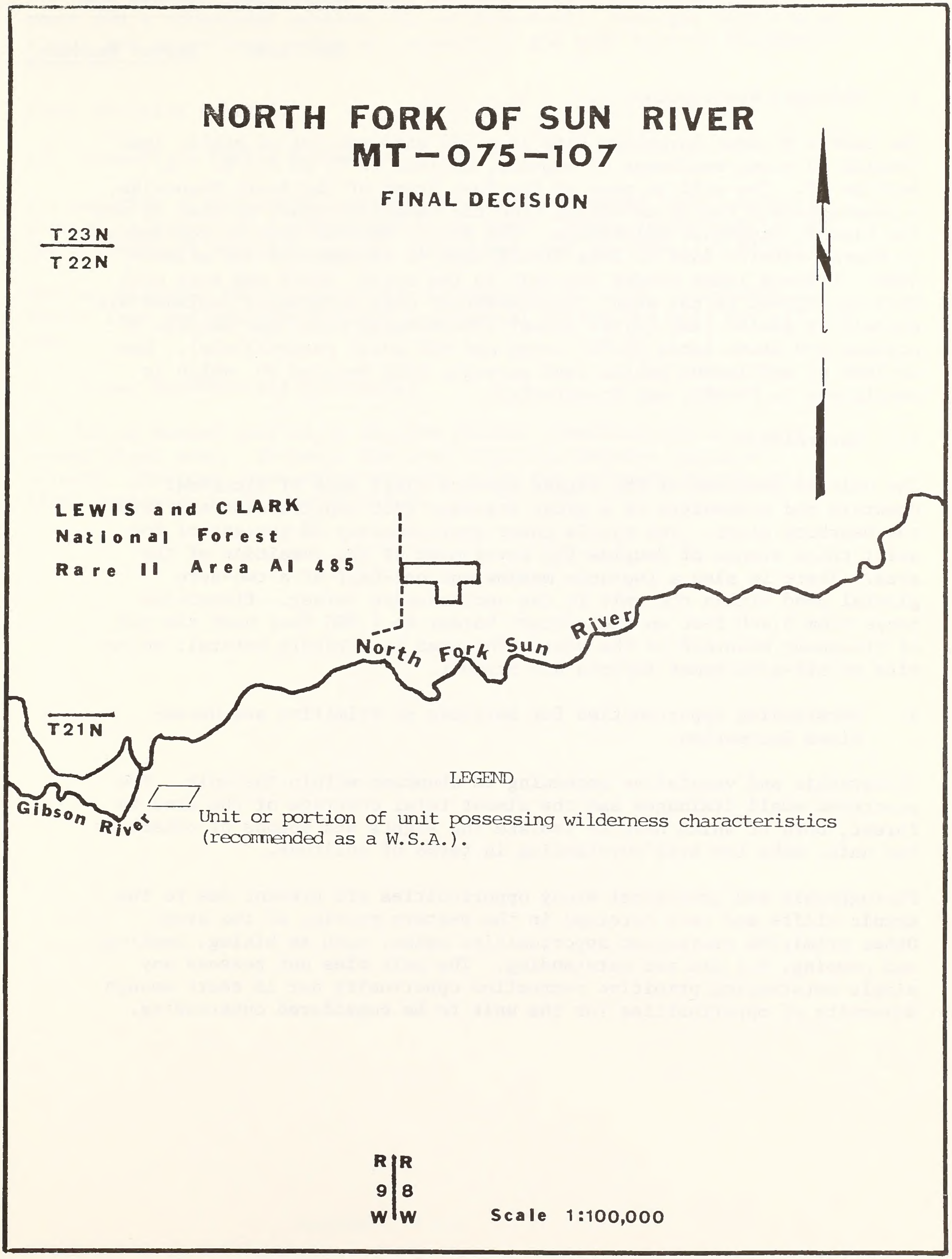
5. Summary of Public Comments:

There was strong public sentiment to carry this unit forward into the wilderness study phase. Specific comments stated that this area should be studied in conjunction with the contiguous Forest Service RARE II area - Al-485. Several individuals commented that because of the area's size it offered limited opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude. Numberous comments identified this as grizzly bear habitat and range, possessing interesting geological formations, habitat for other wildlife, plus wild grasslands and juniper forests. It is also identified as wolf and mountain sheep habitat.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

This unit will be retained for wilderness study. Overwhelming support for inclusion plus the attractions when considered in conjunction with the FS RARE II area - Al-485 support this decision.

NORTH FORK OF SUN RIVER
MT-075-107
FINAL DECISION



LEGEND

▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-110

Unit Name Beaver Meadows

1. Physical Description:

The Beaver Meadows Inventory Unit is a 595 acre section of public land located 15 miles southwest of Augusta, Montana in T. 18 N., R. 7 W., Section 30. The unit is part of the East Front of the Rocky Mountains, a physiographic region extending from the Canadian border to what is now the Lincoln-Scapegoat Wilderness. The Beaver Meadows unit is contiguous to Forest Service RARE II Area F1-485 that is recommended for wilderness. Private lands border the unit to the north, south and east with National Forest to the west. The inventory unit originally included six parcels of public land (2,195 acres) intermingled with four parcels of private and state lands (4,987 acres and 640 acres respectively). Due to lack of sufficient public land acreage, only Section 30, which is contiguous to F1-485, was inventoried.

2. Naturalness:

The unit is composed of the rugged eastern cliff face of Steamboat Mountain and headwaters of a minor drainage that empties eastward into the Dearborn River. The cliffs cover approximately 20 percent of the unit; thick stands of Douglas-fir cover most of the remainder of the area. There is also a two-acre meadow and one-half of a two-acre glacial pond within the unit in the northeastern corner. Elevations range from 5,440 feet on the eastern border to 7,680 feet near the top of Steamboat Mountain to the west. The area is entirely natural; no on-site or off-site human impacts are present.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Topographic and vegetative screening is abundant within the unit. The scattered small drainages and the almost total coverage of the area by forest, both of which help to isolate the sights and sounds of others in the unit, make the area outstanding in terms of solitude.

Photographic and geological study opportunities are present due to the scenic cliffs and rock outcrops in the western portion of the area. Other primitive recreation opportunities exist, such as hiking, hunting, and camping, but are not outstanding. The unit dies not possess any single outstanding primitive recreation opportunity nor is there enough diversity of opportunities for the unit to be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit provides habitat for mule and whitetail deer, elk, bighorn sheep and a threatened species, the grizzly bear, Geologic features of scenic and educational value are present on the east face of Steamboat Mountain.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

The majority of the public comments reveived supported the classification of this unit as a wilderness study area. These people pointed out the presence of solitude, scenic values and most importantly, wildlife.

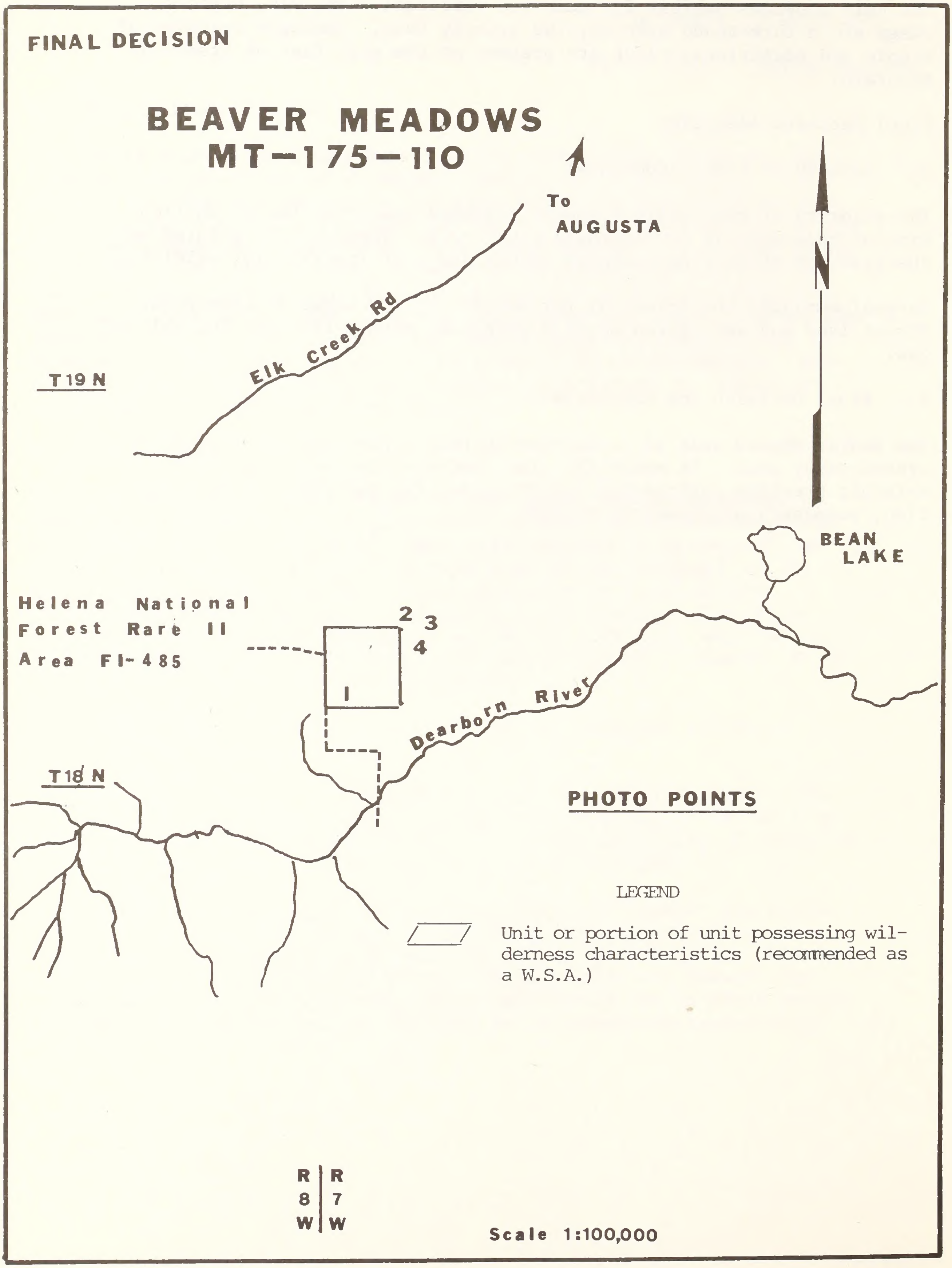
Several emphazed the potential for harvesting 200 acres of commerical forest land and one person noted a potential within the unit for oil and gas.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Beaver Meadow unit is to receive further consideration as a wilderness study area. It meets the size criteria; appears completely natural; provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and in addition, possesses supplemental values.

FINAL DECISION

BEAVER MEADOWS
MT-175-110



LEGEND

▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.)

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-114

Unit Name Elkhorn

1. Physical Description:

The Elkhorn Inventory Unit is located approximately 6 miles northeast of Boulder, Montana. Public access is via an improved road along Muskrat Creek.

The unit is bounded on the south and east by Forest Service RARE II area A1-620, Bullock Hill (partial), a portion of the congressionally-designated Elkhorn Wilderness Study Area of 85,760 acres. A final recommendation concerning this area is pending. State and private lands comprise the northern and western boundaries. A private inholding is situated in the center of the inventory unit.

The original boundary encompassed 5,655 acres of which 5,478 acres are in public ownership and 177 acres are privately owned. There was found to be an additional 220 acres of contiguous, roadless public land; this was added to the original acreage to form the inventory unit. After the invensive inventory was completed, 2,333 acres were dropped from further study to eliminate about 12 miles of extensively-bladed vehicle ways.

The final acreage for the recommended wilderness study area (WSA) is 3,585 acres.

2. Naturalness:

The proposed WSA is characterized by steep, irregular topography ranging in elevation from 5,000 to 8,000 feet. Except for small, isolated open areas, the landscape is covered by timber. It is an area that appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

There are some minor imprints of man's work: vehicle ways, cabin remains, a constructed foot trail, the remnants of past mining activity. But the impact of these intrusions is not great enough, individually or cumulatively, to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Elkhorn Inventory Unit offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The preponderance of forest cover over the rugged topography is effective in isolating visitors from one another. In conjunction with the contiguous Elkhorn Wilderness Study Area, opportunities for solitude are even greater.

While the natural character of the landscape helps to create outstanding opportunities for solitude, it offers the potential for superb hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing experiences. Other recreational opportunities include deer and upland game bird hunting. The area possesses both a diversity in number of activities possible and the outstanding quality of several opportunities. In conjunction with the contiguous Elkhorn Wilderness Study Area, opportunities for recreation increase substantially.

4. Supplemental Values:

The proposed WSA contains supplemental values in the form of ecological and heritage features. The area provides habitat for several game species including elk, moose, deer, and blue and ruffed grouse.

The remains of historic occupations and associated mining activity may be of interest to the visitor.

Final Decision Analysis

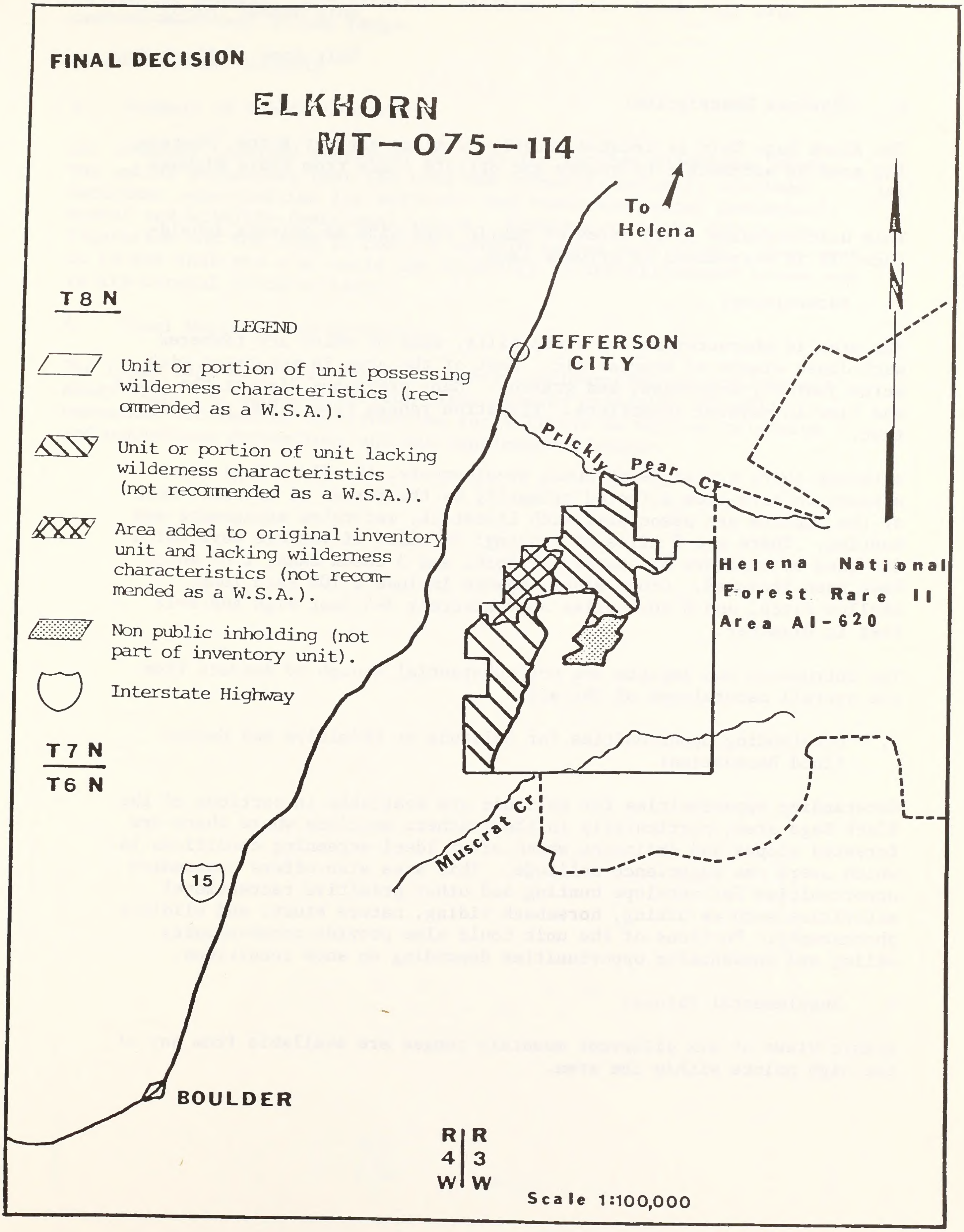
5. Summary of Public Comments:

The majority of the comments supported wilderness study area classification for this unit. They exphasized existing opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and stressed the need to preserve the diverse habitat which supports populations of elk, moose, deer and grouse.

Several letters pointed out the presence of commercial timber and potential mineral deposits within the unit.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Elkhorn unit is to receive further consideration for wilderness classification as a wilderness study area. The unit meets the size criteria; appears primarily natural; possesses outstandings opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, and has supplemental values.



FINAL DECISION

ELKHORN MT-075-114

LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
T 8 N
T 7 N
T 6 N
To Helena
JEFFERSON CITY
Prickly Pear Cr
Helena National Forest Rare II Area AI-620
Muscrat Cr
15
BOULDER
R 4 W
R 3 W
N
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-115

Unit Name Black Sage

1. Physical Description:

The Black Sage Unit is located roughly 32 miles east of Butte, Montana. The area is accessible by county and private roads from state Highway 281.

This unit contains 5,926 acres of public land with no private inholdings. It is surrounded by private land.

2. Naturalness:

The area is characterized by steep hills, some of which are timbered with dense stands of Douglas fir. Most of the area is vegetated with scrub juniper, sagebrush, and grasses. Many drainages dissect the hills and flow in several directions. Elevation ranges from 5,000 to 6,000 feet.

Although there are signs of human developments, the Black Sage area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. Most of the impacts are associated with livestock, watershed management and hunting. There are 5 miles of fencing; 5½ miles of vehicle ways which are used by ranchers or hunters or both; and 3 check dams, 2 of which have been breached. Other minor impacts include a 100 yard long, shallow ditch, and 3 rock piles approximately 3-5 feet high and 6-12 feet in diameter.

The intrusions and impacts are not substantial enough to detract from the overall naturalness of the area.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are available in portions of the Black Sage area, particularly in the southern sections where there are forested slopes and drainages which offer ideal screening conditions in which users can experience solitude. This area also offers oustanding opportunities for antelope hunting and other primitive recreational activities such as hiking, horseback riding, nature study, and wildlife photography. Portions of the unit could also provide cross-country skiing and snowshoeing opportunities depending on snow conditions.

4. Supplemental Values:

Scenic views of six different mountain ranges are available from any of the high points within the area.

This area also provides habitat for antelope, deer and several species of smaller mammals. Additionally, portions of the Black Sage area provide mule deer winter range.

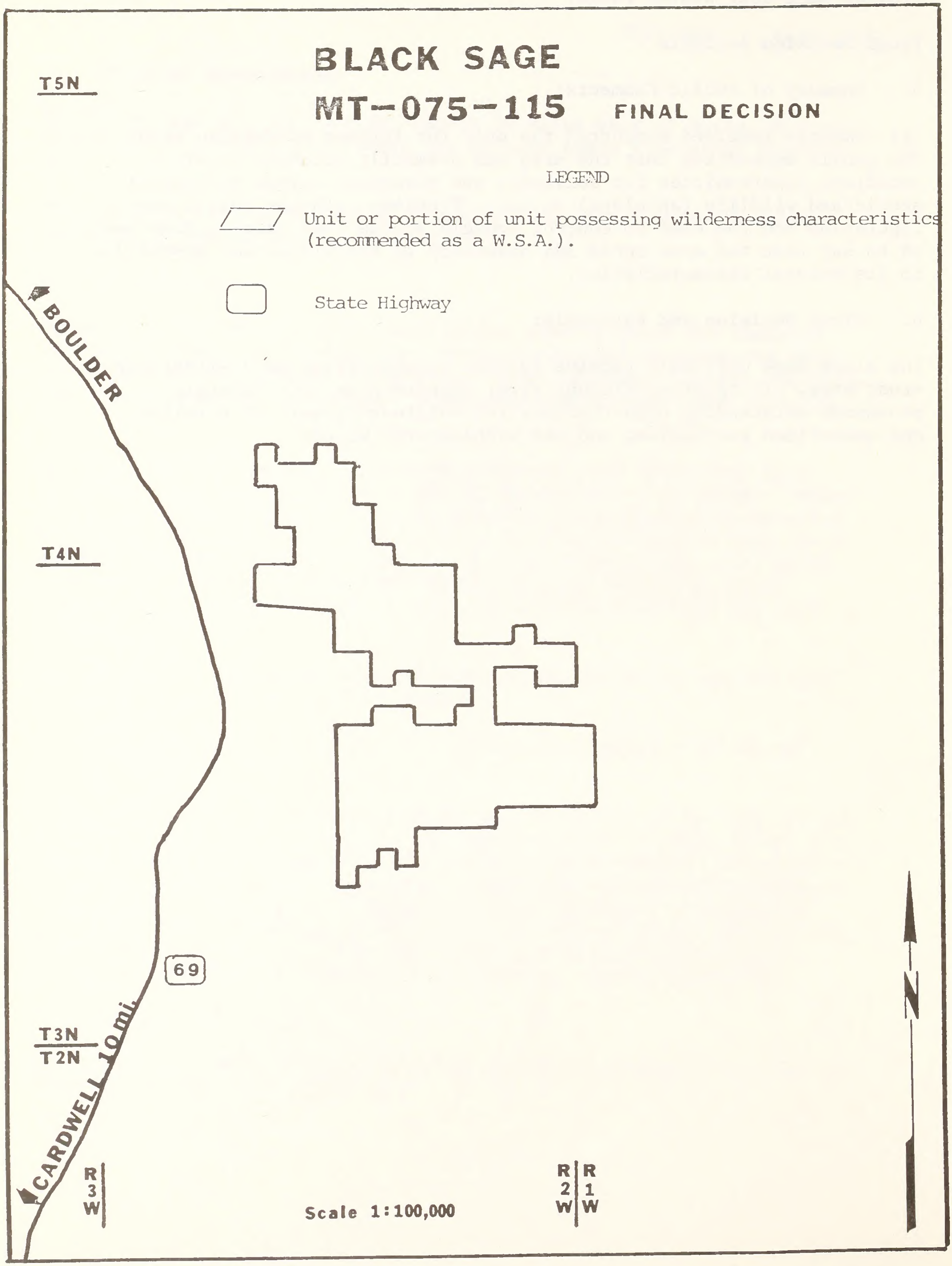
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

All comments received supported the unit for further wilderness study. The public emphasized that the area was primarily natural; provided excellent opportunities for solitude; and possessed unique geological, scenic and wildlife (antelope) values. Problems with the unit's configuration and the need to control vehicle access were cited. Many went on to say that the area could add diversity to the wilderness system due to its natural characteristics.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Black Sage unit will receive further consideration as a wilderness study area. It is of sufficient size; appears primarily natural; possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude as well as primitive and unconfined recreation; and has supplemental values.


BLACK SAGE
MT-075-115
FINAL DECISION
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
State Highway
T5N
T4N
T3N
T2N
BOULDER
CARDWELL 10 mi.
69
R 3 W
R 2 W
R 1 W
Scale 1:100,000
N

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-133

Unit Name Yellowstone River Island

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed public island in the Yellowstone River. It is located about two and one half miles northeast of Livingston, Montana. The island is fifty-three acres in size with no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a relatively flat sand and gravel bar which varies from zero to ten feet above the river level (August) at an elevation of approximately 4,415 feet. The unit contains stands of cottonwoods with open, grassy understories, diverse communities of shrubs, open pockets of low growth plants, high water channels, marshy areas, several small ponds, and three sandy inlets. The main channel of the Yellowstone River flows along the north side of the island.

The only human impacts found were two old cars inconspicuously located on the east and west ends of the island. Off-site intrusions within close proximity include two private homes to the north and one small ranch to the south. No transportation routes are within influential range. In sum, the island appears to have been affected primarily by natural forces with man's imprint substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are available on the island. Because of its large size, location, excellent vegetation screening and numerous accessible points, visitors can be easily separated from one another.

Recreation opportunities are outstanding on and from the unit. Game fishing in the surrounding Yellowstone River is outstanding as is canoeing and river floating. Because of the wide diversity of plant life and animals, opportunities for nature study, photography and fall hunting abound throughout the area.

4. Supplemental Values:

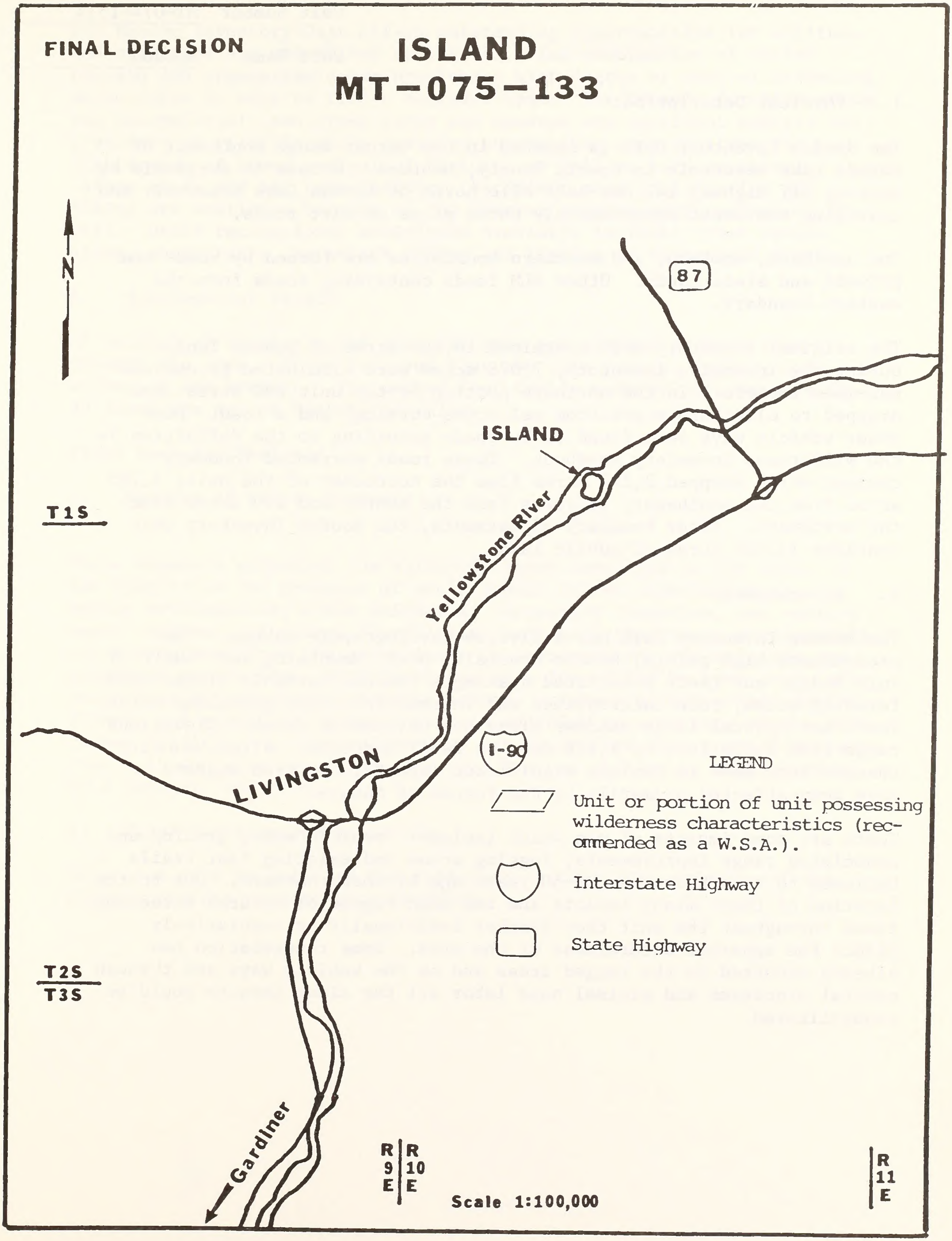
Due to the river surrounding the unit, undisturbed habitat for wildlife, and off-site vistas of the Absaroka and Crazy Mountains, ecological, scientific and scenic values are available.

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Comments received for this unit were few in number and equally balanced. Supportive letters addressed the area's natural attributes; opportunities for solitude; scenic values, and wildlife habitat as being positive characteristics. Those in opposition stressed the island's limited size; ease of accessibility by boat; and its potential for conflicting with future, development projects along the Yellowstone River. There were no oppositional comments made which pertained to the unit's wilderness characteristics.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Yellowstone River Island will receive further study as a wilderness study area. It meets the size criteria; appears primarily natural; possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation; and has supplemental values.


FINAL DECISION
ISLAND
MT-075-133
N
87
ISLAND
Yellowstone River
T1S
I-90
LIVINGSTON
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
Interstate Highway
State Highway
T2S
T3S
Gardiner
R 9 E
R 10 E
R 11 E
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-074-151A

Unit Name Hoodoo

1. Physical Description:

The Hoodoo Inventory Unit is located in the Garnet Range southwest of Nevada Lake Reservoir in Powell County, Montana. Access is available by exiting off highway 141 one-half mile north of Nevada Lake Reservoir and traveling southwest approximately three miles on dirt roads.

The northern, western, and southern boundaries are formed by roads and private and state lands. Other BLM lands containing roads form the eastern boundary.

The original inventory unit contained 18,600 acres of public land. During the intensive inventory, 7,078 acres were eliminated to exclude man-made impacts. In the northern portion of the unit 848 acres were dropped to eliminate scars from selective cutting and a road. Four other vehicle ways were found to be roads according to the definition in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook. These roads warranted boundary changes which dropped 2,270 acres from the northeast of the unit; 3,785 acres from the southeast; 15 acres from the south; and 160 acres from the northwest. After boundary adjustments, the Hoodoo Inventory Unit contains 11,522 acres of public land.

2. Naturalness:

The Hoodoo Inventory Unit has a diverse physiographic makeup. The predominate high points; Hoodoo Mountain, Devil Mountain, and Fourth of July Ridge, and their associated drainages contain variable slopes with forested areas, rock outcroppings and intermittent open grassland parks. There are several large meadows along Wet Cottonwood Creek. Elevations range from 5,000 feet to 7,438 feet on Devil Mountain. After boundary changes were made to exclude significant impacts, the area appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

There are some impacts of man which include: vehicle ways, grazing and associated range improvements, logging areas and existing foot trails believed to have been made 25-50 years ago by sheep herders. Due to the location of these minor impacts and the high degree of natural screening found throughout the unit they neither individually or cumulatively affect the apparent naturalness of the area. Some revegetation has already occurred in the logged areas and on the vehicle ways and through natural processes and minimal hand labor all the minor impacts could be rehabilitated.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Hoodoo Inventory Unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The combination of varied terrain and vegetative cover provides a high degree of natural screening which makes it easy to find a secluded spot. The densely forested areas and intermittent open grass parks and meadows are excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife which provides outstanding opportunities for sightseeing of these zoological features as well as bird watching, nature study and big game hunting. Excellent opportunities for day hiking are available because of the diverse physiographic makeup of the unit. Other recreational activities available include: rock scrambling, photography, horseback riding and fishing in Cottonwood Creek.

4. Supplemental Values:

Of ecological value are the numerous game and nongame species that inhabit the area. It is believed that the rare martin, fisher, and wolverine are present. The marked foot trails made by sheepherders 25-50 years ago are of historical value.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

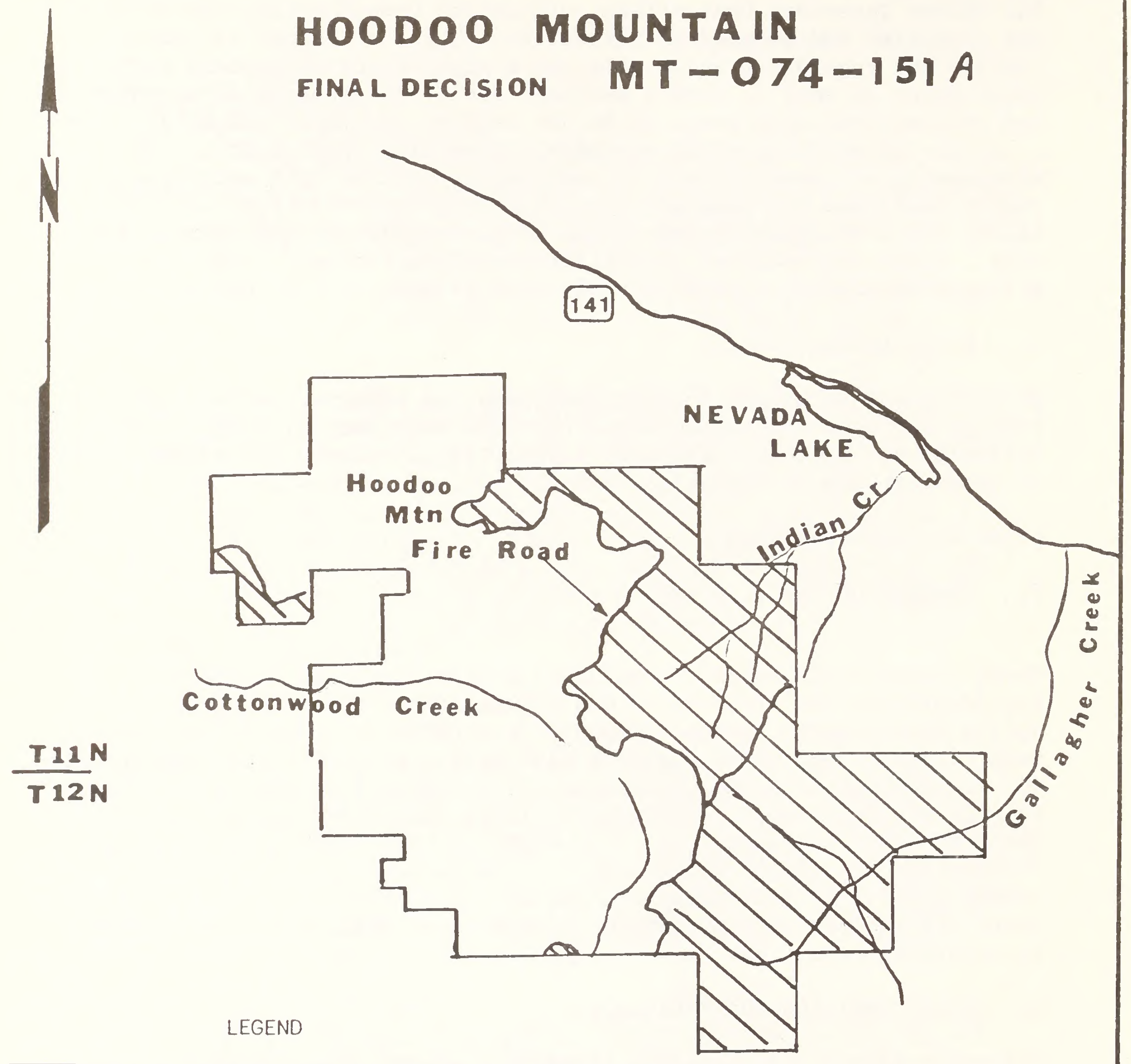
Three comments addressed the value of timber contained in the unit. A few identified the presence of man's impact in the form of fences, spring developments, stock driveways, recreation campsites, and vehicle ways. However, of these, several also indicated that these developments did not detract from the naturalness or opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Additional features identified by some are: old sheep trails, outstanding natural beauty, presence of wolverine, martin, fisher, and possiblity grizzly bear in addition to a variety of the more common wildlife. Cottonwood meadows was identified as a special attraction. It was also noted that the area has the ability to easily revert to a natural condition.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

This area will be retained for wilderness study. The majority of the public comments support this decision.

HOODOO MOUNTAIN

FINAL DECISION MT-074-151A



LEGEND

▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

▢ State Highway

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-074-151B

Unit Name Gallagher Creek

1. Physical Description:

The Gallagher Creek Inventory Unit as reported in the Proposed Decision Summary (September 1979), encompassed an area of 5,927 acres of public land. A boundary adjustment was made during the Final Decision due to the identification of Indian Creek Road. This new change reduces the unit by 1,670 acres to a final size of 4,257 public acres.

The unit is now bordered to the west by the Hoodoo Mountain Fire Road, to the north by the Indian Creek Road and to the east and south by private and state lands. The unit is separated from the adjacent Hoodoo Mountain Unit 151A by the Hoodoo Mountain Fire Road. The area is located in the Garnet Range, southwest of Nevada Lake Reservoir in Powell County, Montana. Access to the area is via existing State Highway 141 ½ mile north of Nevada Lake Reservoir, and heading south for three miles on dirt roads.

2. Naturalness:

The Gallagher Creek Unit appears to be extremely natural in character. It ranges in elevation from 5,240 feet to 7,016 feet, transected in many areas by the Indian Creek and Gallaher Creek drainages. The unit is comprised predominantly, by coniferous forest with a few aspen pockets, open meadows or rocky bluffs and screes.

The only imprints of human activity are two very short spurs which extend into the unit from the Hoodoo Mountain Fire Road and Indian Creek Road. The combined spurs are less than a ¼ of a mile in length and have a very minor influence on the area's apparent naturalness. The unit is otherwise undeveloped and retains its pristine character.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation on the Gallagher Creek Inventory Unit are outstanding. The 2 major drainages and their tributaries encourage visitor use dispersal. The distribution of coniferous forest throughout the unit adds additional screening, promoting excellent opportunities for solitude. The unit's topography and scenery make activities such as hiking, backpacking, sightseeing, and photography of exceptional quality. The wildlife offer an additional excellent opportunity for nature study and hunting.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area is known to be critical habitat for many species of wildlife. Elk, mule deer, black bear, whitetail deer, mountain lion and moose inhabit the area, as well as numerous non-game species.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Several comments addressed study phase considerations such as the presence of commerical forest land and that designation would promote vehicle use, now occurring in this area, on private land. These concerns will be assessed through the Bureau's Planning Process.

Opportunities for solitude and unconfined and primitive recreation were cited. Several emphasized the importance of the area as wildlife habitat for deer, elk, moose, bear, mountain lion and the threatened grizzly bear plus the presence of petrified wood.

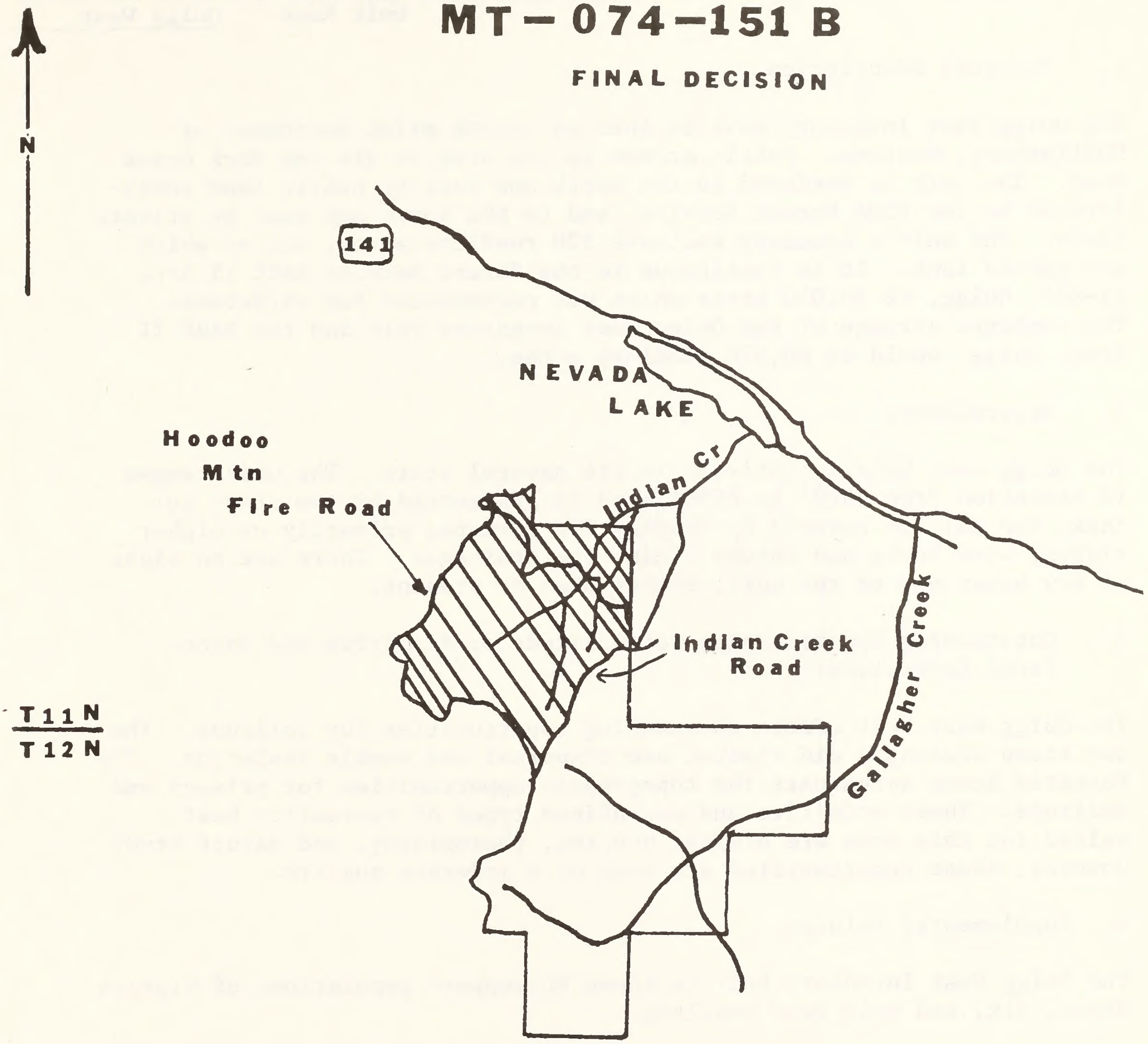
Additional comments pertained to the naturalness of the area stating the existance of grazing improvements and the presence of the Indian Creek road/way. Comments which addressed the road/way issue were varying and controversal. The area was cited as having the same qualities and characteristics as the Hoodoo Mountain Unit (151A), and that it is of manageable size.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The area to the northwest of Indian Creek Road has been dropped. Although the area (4,257 acres) is less than 5,000 acres, it does meet the size criteria due to public support and as a manageable unit. Gallagher Creek possesses all of the remaining wilderness criteria and will be retained for further wilderness study.

GALLAGHER CREEK
MT – 074 –151 B

FINAL DECISION



LEGEND

▱ Unit or portion of unit possessing wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

▢ State Highway

Scale 1:100,000

R
10 | 9
W | W

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-074-155

Unit Name Quigg West

1. Physical Description:

The Quigg West Inventory Unit is located twenty miles northwest of Philipsburg, Montana. Public access to the area is via the Rock Creek Road. The unit is bordered to the north and west by public land administered by the USDA Forest Service, and to the south and east by private lands. The unit's boundary encloses 520 roadless acres, all of which are public land. It is contiguous to the Forest Service RARE II Area Q1-807, Quigg, of 60,050 acres which was recommended for wilderness. The combined acreage of the Quigg West Inventory Unit and the RARE II Area, Quigg, would be 60,570 roadless acres.

2. Naturalness:

The Quigg West Unit is entirely in its natural state. The unit ranges in elevation from 4920' to 6930', and is transected by two steep gulches. The unit is covered by Douglas fir forests, primarily on higher ridges, with forbs and shrubs lining the drainages. There are no signs of any human use of the unit, either past or present.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Quigg West Unit offers outstanding opportunities for solitude. The two steep drainages aid visitor use dispersal and enable isolation. The forested areas accentuate the topographic opportunities for privacy and solitude. Those primitive and unconfined types of recreation best suited for this area are hiking, hunting, photography, and nature study. However, these opportunities are only of a moderate quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Quigg West Inventory Unit is known to support populations of bighorn sheep, elk, and mule deer yearlong.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

All but two comments support studying the area, particularly in conjunction with the adjacent Rare II area. It's value for timber was identified, however, the comment received referred to a 500 year old stand of Douglas fir located in the Quigg East Unit #154. This unit was dropped in the initial inventory. It is felt that the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined primitive recreation in a very natural area. It also provides habitat for bighorn sheep, deer and elk.

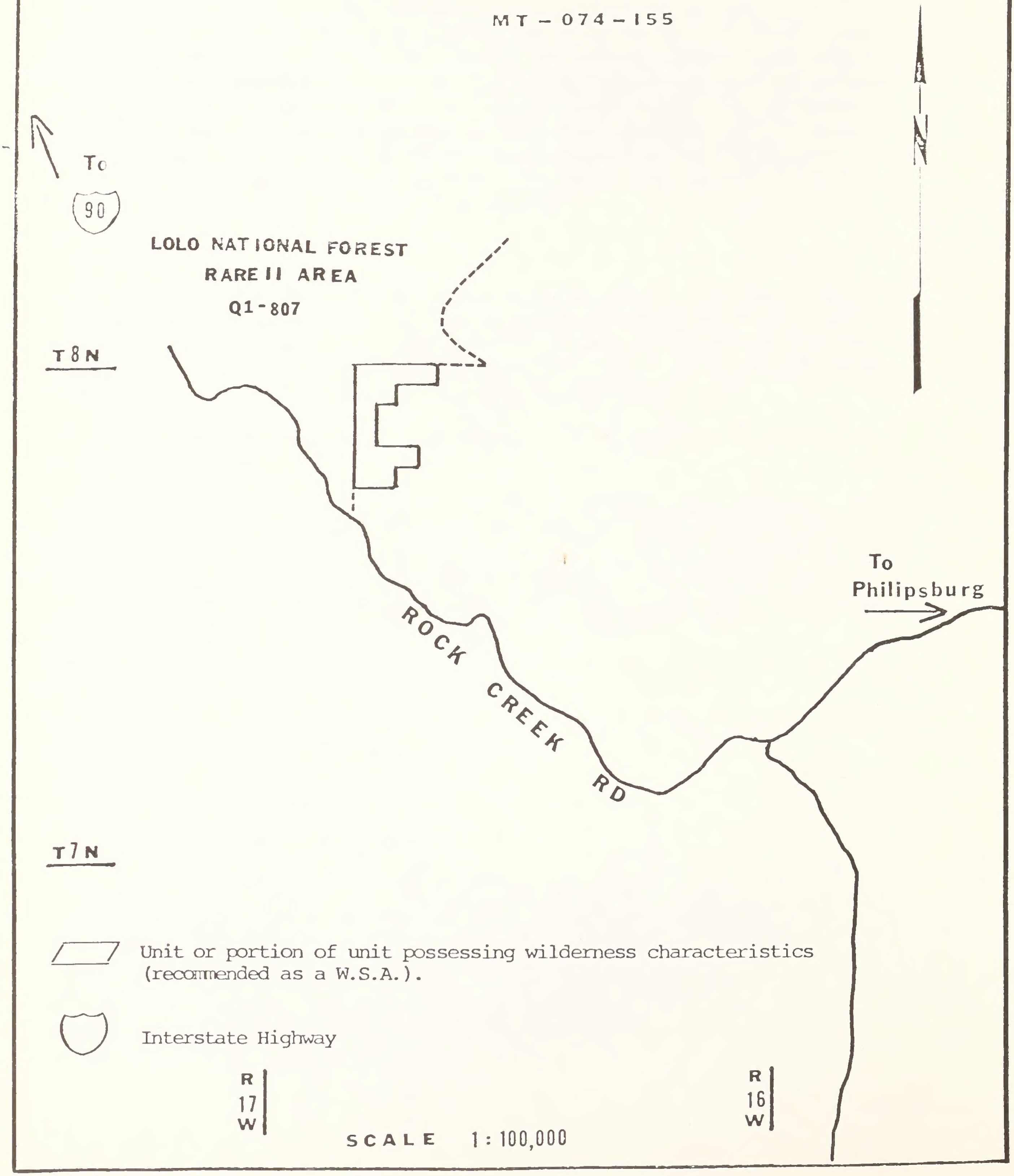
6. Final Decision and Rationale

This area will be retained for wilderness study. Public comments and characteristics of the area support this decision.

FINAL DECISION

QUIGG WEST TACK-ON

MT-074-155



BUTTE DISTRICT

INVENTORY UNITS

DROPPED FROM

WILDERNESS CONSIDERATION

Unit Number MT-076-003

Unit Name Blacktail Mountains West

1. Physical Description:

Blacktail Mountain West inventory unit lies between Small Horn Canyon and Sheep Creek Canyon at the west end of Blacktail Ridge, approximately fifteen miles south of Dillon, Montana.

The Conover Ranch access road forms approximately one and one-quarter miles of the eastern boundary and the Small Horn Canyon road forms approximately one-quarter mile of the western boundary. The rest of the area is bounded by private land.

The boundary encloses 2,130 acres of entirely publicly owned lands. Although the unit is less than 5,000 acres, it was included in the initial inventory because it is adjacent to BLM roadless inventory unit MT-076-002 (Blacktail Mountains) which is approximately 19,189 acres in size. The two units share the same physiographic characteristics and are clearly part of the same ecosystem. They are separated by a road corridor at the narrowest division.

2. Naturalness:

The area is dominated by a central unnamed mountain sloping into canyons on both the east and west boundaries. Elevations range from 8,282 feet on this mountain to 6,100 feet in Sheep Creek Canyon. The unit exhibits timbered and scree-covered mountain slopes, scattered meadows, dramatic cliffs and deep canyons. Less than one mile of faint vehicle tracks and less than one mile of fencing are within the boundary. The unit remains primarily natural and man's imprints are substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The unit offers outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation. The diversity of topography and vegetation, forming canyons, ridges, cliffs, deep forests and hillside meadows, insures the opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the unit. Recreational opportunities include hunting, hiking, camping, and rock climbing.

4. Supplemental Values:

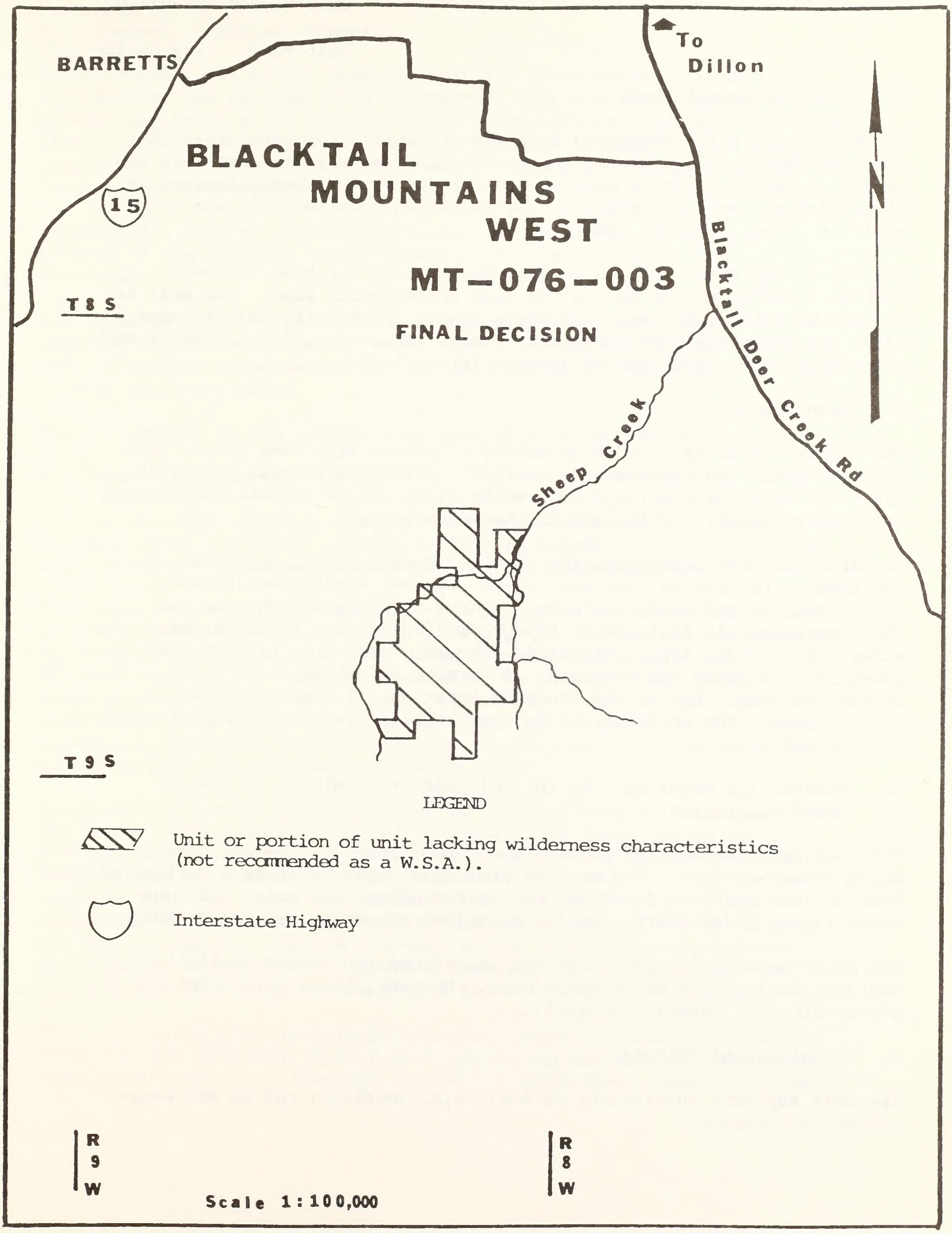
The eastern boundary of this unit displays 800 foot rock cliffs rising sharply out of Sheep Creek Canyon. These formations represent significant scenic value and are of geologic interest.

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Many comments were received agreeing that this unit should not undergo further wilderness study, with very little support for study. Most comments listing specific impacts or criteria also discussed unit 002. It was difficult relating these comments to on-the-ground impacts because of this multiple unit approach.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The area is not recommended for wilderness study. Although the unit possesses outstanding wilderness qualities, it is not of sufficient size. An improved, maintained and regularly used road separating this unit from the adjacent 19,189 acre inventory unit, accesses 400 acres of private land lying directly between the two units. The deeded land contains a working sheep and cattle ranch. Although the two areas represent one ecological unit, this road and ranch operation represent a substantial and overwhelming division between the two units.


BARRETTS
To Dillon
BLACKTAIL MOUNTAINS WEST
MT-076-003
FINAL DECISION
15
N
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
Sheep Creek
T 8 S
T 9 S
LEGEND
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Interstate Highway
R 9 W
R 8 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-004

Unit Name Big Spring Gulch

1. Physical Description:

The Big Spring Gulch Inventory Unit was originally composed of 43,060 acres of public land administered by the BLM. Boundaries have been extended to include acreage previously excluded by what were incorrectly classified as boundary "roads." The resulting total acreage was 43,327 roadless acres of public land.

The Big Spring Gulch unit is located three miles northeast of Dell, Montana. Public access is via the Sage Creek County road. The unit is bounded by public, private, and state lands. Within the unit's boundaries are six parcels of non-public lands. Those parcels consist of 980 acres of private land, and 80 acres of state land.

2. Naturalness:

The Big Spring Gulch Unit is primarily a fifteen mile long, high, open ridge of grassland-sagebrush vegetation. The ridge extends generally north and south with extensive networks of drainages on both the eastern and western sides, particulary in the southern half.

The area has been used primarily for livestock grazing, and there are a few impacts related to that use, i.e.: fences, spring developments, water troughs, and vehicular ways. Fences exist throughout the unit. They are generally isolated by topographic screening, though several miles are on ridge tops. Spring developments and water troughs are generally dispersed and screened. A network of vehicle ways exist within the unit. Due to the isolated locations of these impacts, neither singly nor collectively do they detract from the overall naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are offered by the Big Spring Gulch Inventory Unit. The maze of drainages offer visitors a variety of routes, thus enabling dispersal of use throughout the unit. The numerous ridges additionally provide excellent screening between drainages.

The opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation available are hunting, hiking, and horseback riding. However, these activities are of a moderate, not outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit supports populations of deer, elk, antelope, ruffed and sage-grouse, and eagles.

5. Summary of Public Comments

Public comments point out that the unit is crisscrossed by roads, that even though they have not been maintained, they are deeply cut into the ground, and being a dry site, would be substantially noticeable for some time in the future. Also mentioned is the role of the unit for forage production in allotment management and the necessity of existing and future range developments.

Naturalness, as a wilderness attribute, is questioned on this unit because of the existing roads, fences, other developments, and off-site intrusions.

All comments relating to solitude conclude that the unit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude. A combination of open terrain, lack of vegetative screening and off-site intrusions are referred to to support that conclusion.

Public comments do not support this area as a wilderness study area.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

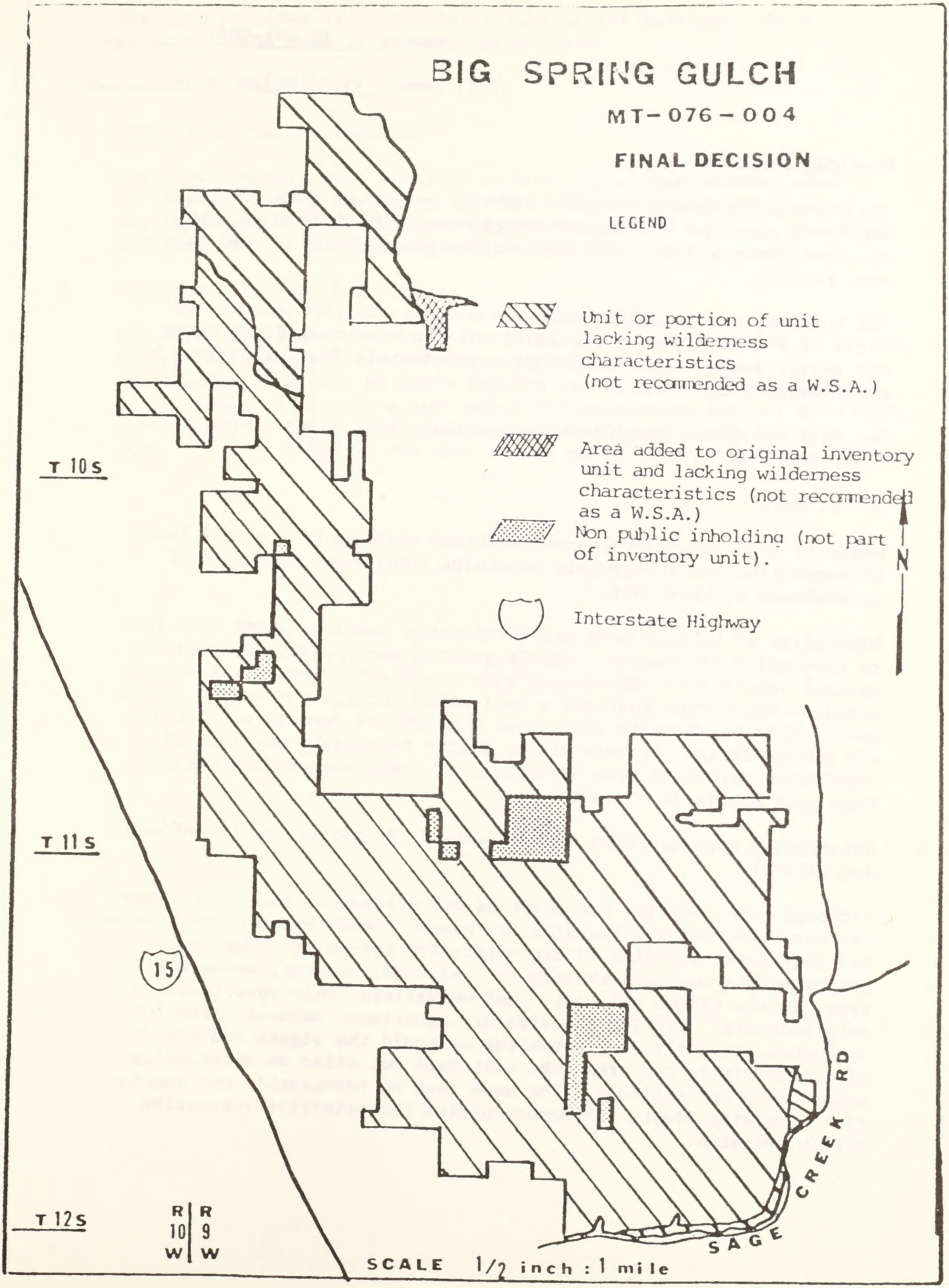
In consideration of public comments and reconsideration of intensive inventory data the final decision on Unit MT-076-004, Big Spring Gulch will be to not recommend this unit as a wilderness study area.

Intensive inventory determined the unit to be borderline on naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude. Fences and vehicle ways are in evidence throughout the unit. From most vantage points one or both of these impacts are visible. Several miles of fences are along, and crossing ridgetops increasing their visibility. Many of the vehicle ways follow ridgetop routes which increases their visiblity. In other locations, fences and vehicle ways lie in the canyon bottoms which would interfere with the solitude experience.

Opportunities for solitude are found in the multitude of drainages which are found in the southern half of the unit. The large number and complexity of these drainage patterns offer many places where one could avoid sights and sounds of other people within the unit. There is no question that the opportunity exists, the question is, is the opportunity outstanding. On the basis of the shallowness of the drainages, the ease of passing from one drainage to the next, and the relatively short amount of time needed to see a number of these drainages, the opportunities for solitude are judged to be less than outstanding.

These conclusions are supported by public comment. Comments supporting study for the unit were of a general nature and did not address wilderness characteristics. Comments specific to wilderness characteristics were definite in their reference to the absence of these characteristics. Public comment was clear in pointing out the lack of naturalness to be found within the unit. Comments regarding solitude were unanimous in support of a definite "not outstanding" rating for the solitude experience.

Considering both the intensive inventory and public comment it is recommended that this unit be removed from further wilderness consideration.


BIG SPRING GULCH
MT-076-004
FINAL DECISION
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
N
T 10 S
T 11 S
T 12 S
R 10 W
R 9 W
15
SAGE CREEK RD
SCALE 1/2 inch : 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-006

Unit Name White Hills South

1. Physical Description:

The White Hills South inventory unit is primarily open, hilly, sagebrush country. Elevations range from 6,400 feet along the southwest boundary to 7,760 feet on the grassy ridge of the northeast portion.

The roadless area boundary encloses a total of 9,490 acres; 640 acres of the total are state-owned and the remaining 8,850 acres are public lands. This unit runs approximately four miles long by three miles wide.

The unit overlooks Sage Creek, approximately 12 miles northeast of Dell, Montana. Access is by county road out of Dell.

2. Naturalness:

Moderate amounts of development conbined with small size and lack of vegetative and topographic screening contribute to a lack of naturalness in this unit.

Nine miles of vehicle ways are within this boundary along with four to five miles of fencing. Cattle grazing has visibly impacted the natural vegetation. Associated with stock development is a water pipeline which runs four and a half miles through the center of the unit. This pipeline is visible as a ditchline depression that is not revegetating. Because of the gentle topography and lack of vegetative screening, one or several of these impacts are visible from most points in the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Although opportunities for solitude are present in this unit, they are not outstanding. The area is covered almost entirely by grasses and sagebrush, offering little vegetative screening. The topography offers some opportunity for solitude, however, being mostly open, gentle ridges and wide, shallow valleys, this opportunity is only moderate. Lacking the size or significant natural screening to insure the ability of a visitor to avoid the sights and sounds of others within the area, the unit does not offer an outstanding opportunity for solitude. The same lack of topographic and vegetative diversity limits the opportunities for primitive recreation within the area.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area provides critical winter habitat for antelope, and a prairie falcon nest is located in the unit.

FINAL DECISION ANALYSIS

5. Summary of Public Comments:

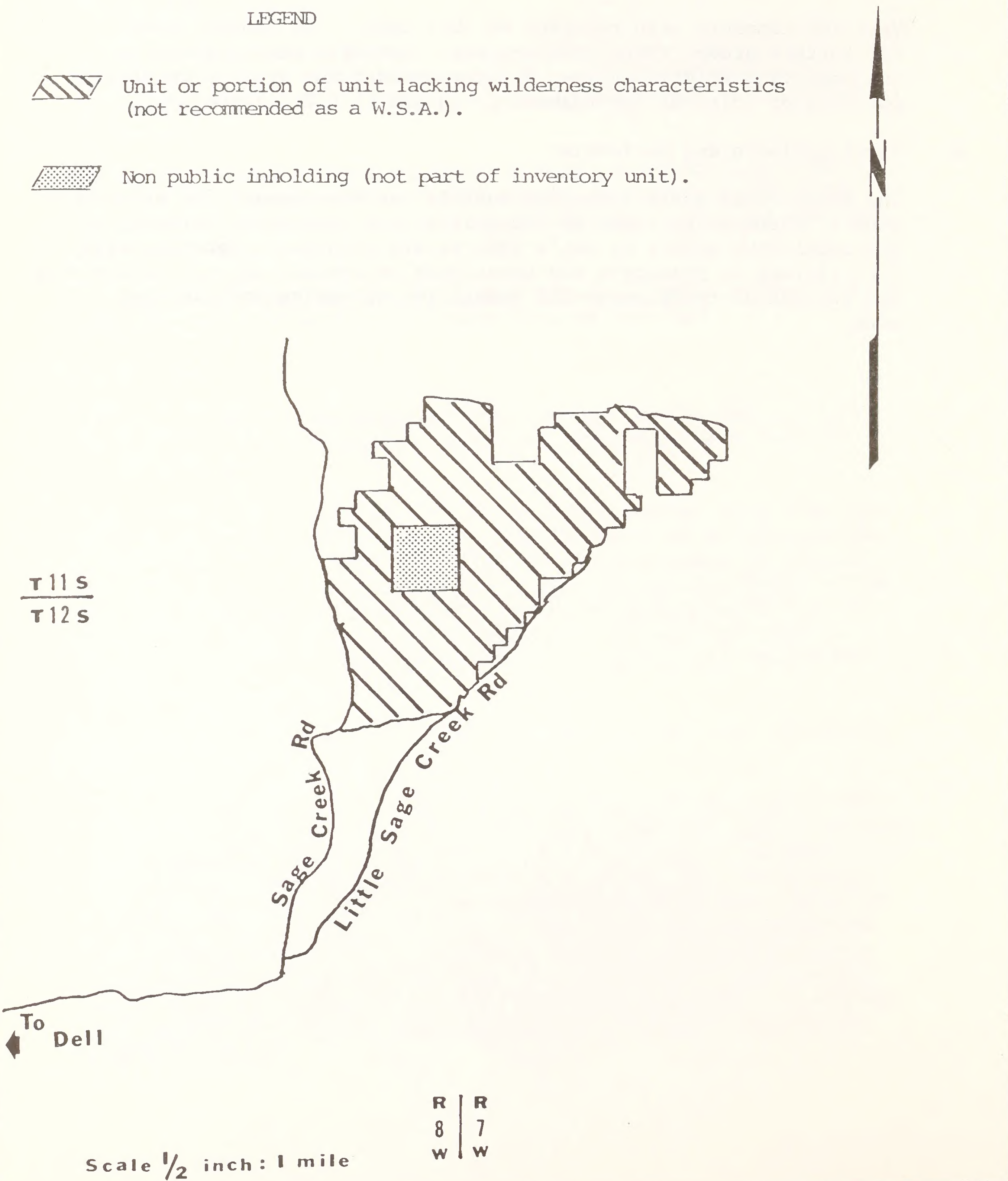
Very few comments were received on this unit. One comment asked for further study, three were opposed. Specific comments pointed out important wildlife values and recommended the area be considered for Area of Critical Environmental Concern (A.C.E.C.) status.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The White Hills South inventory unit is not recommended for wilderness study. Although portions of the unit remain apparently natural, the cumulative effect of man's impacts are apparent. Opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are not outstanding due to lack of topographic and vegetative screening and limiting size.

WHITE HILLS SOUTH FINAL DECISION

MT-076-006


LEGEND
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
▩ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
N
T 11 S
T 12 S
Sage Creek Rd
Little Sage Creek Rd
To Dell
R 8 W
R 7 W
Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-008

Unit Name Basin Creek North

1. Physical Description:

Basin Creek North is located 30 air miles south of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is obtained by exiting I-15 at Dell and traveling the Sage Creek and Basin Creek roads east for approximately 10 miles.

Two boundary revisions relating to vehicle ways were made, decreasing the original area from 20,580 acres to 18,975 acres. The revised unit boundary encloses 17,960 acres of public land, 790 acres of state land, and 80 acres of private land.

This area has an irregular configuration. A five-mile long "tail," one-half to one mile wide, extends east then south from the northeastern corner of the area. The south, west, and north boundaries are formed by roads and private land, and the east boundary is formed by state land.

2. Naturalness:

There are two major landforms in the area consisting of broad basins and a series of alternating long ridges and narrow valleys. Elevations range from 6,492 feet near Basin Creek to 8,160 feet at Vinegar Hill.

Approximately 97% of the area is dominated by grassland and sagebrush communities. Small pockets of Douglas-fir and limber pine are scattered along the eastern boundary and throughout the "tail."

The imprint of man's work is evident throughout the unit. There are 28 miles of vehicle ways, 20 miles of fence, and three and one-half miles of buried pipeline. These impacts are particularly noticeable on ridges and slopes. Other human impacts include a partially revegetated ditch, an old cabin, and livestock grazing. Because of the cumulative effect of these impacts on apparent naturalness, the unit does not appear primarily affected by the forces of nature.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The open nature of the basins, combined with their relatively small size, limits their opportunities for solitude. The series of ridges and valleys does provide some topographical screening; however, it would be difficult to avoid the sights and sounds of others in the area.

Opportunities for primitive recreation exist within the area, but they are limited to hiking and hunting. Neither of these opportunities could be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area provides winter range for antelope, mule deer, and elk.

FINAL DECISION ANALYSIS

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Few comments were received concerning this unit; almost all were opposed to further wilderness study for this area. Interest was expressed that the area receive Area of Critical Environmental Concern consideration if dropped from wilderness consideration.

One comment pointed out that the unit has no more impacts than unit 069, and the reason we were not recommending this unit is because it is grassland and sagebrush and not forested. Without screening vegetation, impacts are more substantially noticeable.

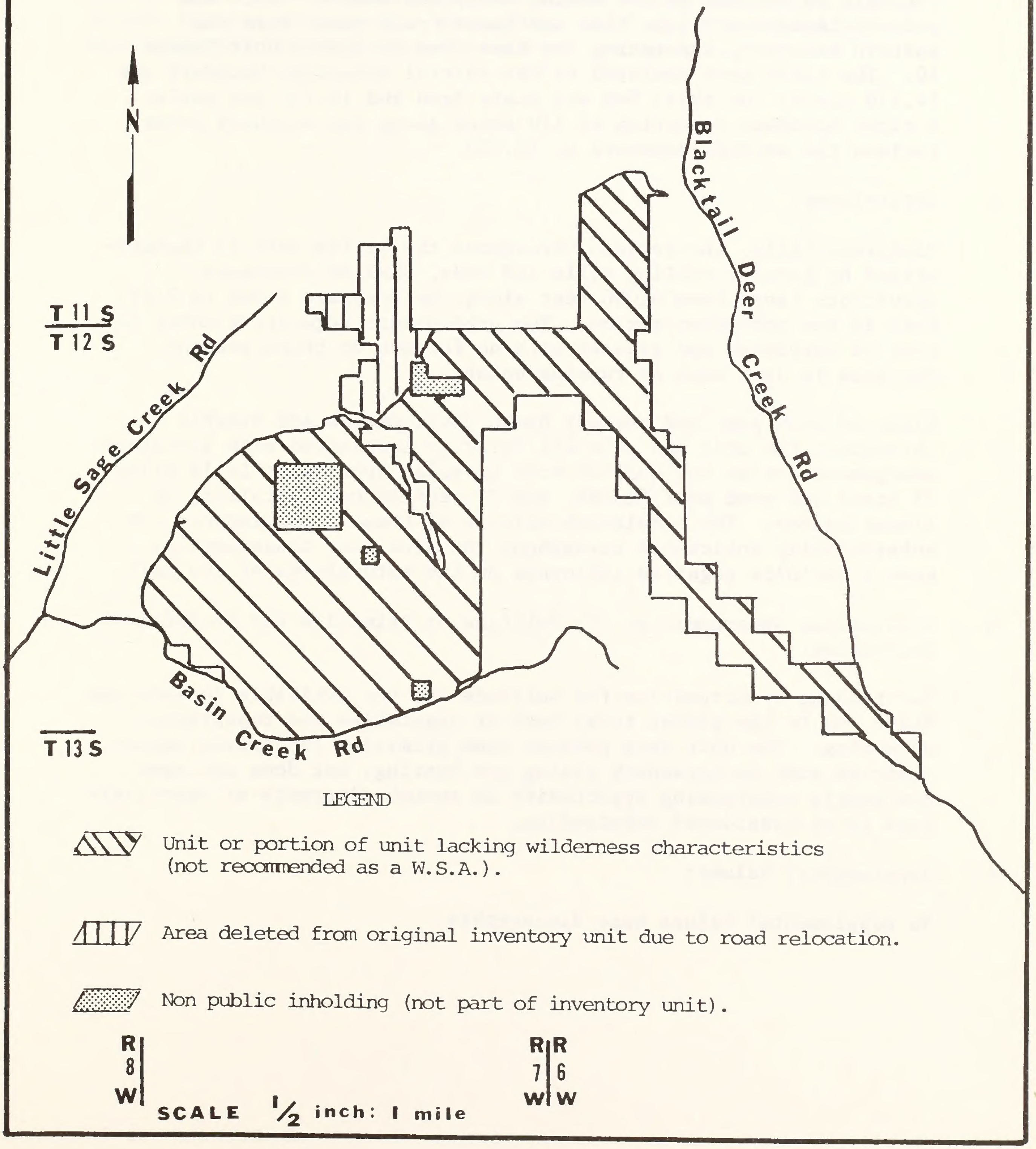
6. Final Decision and Rationale:

This unit does not appear primarily affected by the forces of nature. The high density of fences, vehicle ways, and other developments makes the imprint of man's work substantially noticeable. There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation. The unit is not recommended for further wilderness consideration.

BASIN CREEK NORTH

MT-076-008

FINAL DECISION


N
T 11 S
T 12 S
T 13 S
Little Sage Creek Rd
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
Basin Creek Rd
LEGEND
▧ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
▥ Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
▩ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
R 8 W
R 7 W
R 6 W
SCALE 1/2 inch: 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-009

Unit Name Antelope Flats

1. Physical Description:

Antelope Flats is located 35 air miles south of Dillon, Montana. The unit is bounded on the north, south and west by state and private lands. Antelope Flat and Basin Creek roads form the eastern boundary, separating the area from Inventory Unit Number 10. The total area enclosed by the initial inventory boundary was 14,770 acres. Of this, 640 are state land and 14,130 are public. A minor boundary reduction of 110 acres along the southern border revises the acreage downward to 14,020.

2. Naturalness:

Topographically, the terrain throughout the entire unit is characterized by gentle, rolling hills and wide, shallow drainages. Elevations range from 6,000 feet along the westward draws to 7,217 feet in the northeast region. The predominant vegetative cover is that of sagebrush and grasses with no forests or trees present. The area is dry, with no running water.

Signs of both past and present human developments are visible throughout the unit and area all directly associated with livestock management (three one-quarter acre corrals, approximately 18 miles of steel and wood post fences, and 21 vehicle ways totalling 32 linear miles). The cumulative effects of these minor impacts are substantially noticeable throughout the area and, consequently, have a definite negative influence on the naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Outstanding opportunities for solitude are not available in Antelope Flats due to the almost total lack of vegetative and topographic screening. The unit does possess some primitive recreation opportunities such as horseback riding and hunting, but does not have any single outstanding opportunity or enough diversity of opportunities to be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

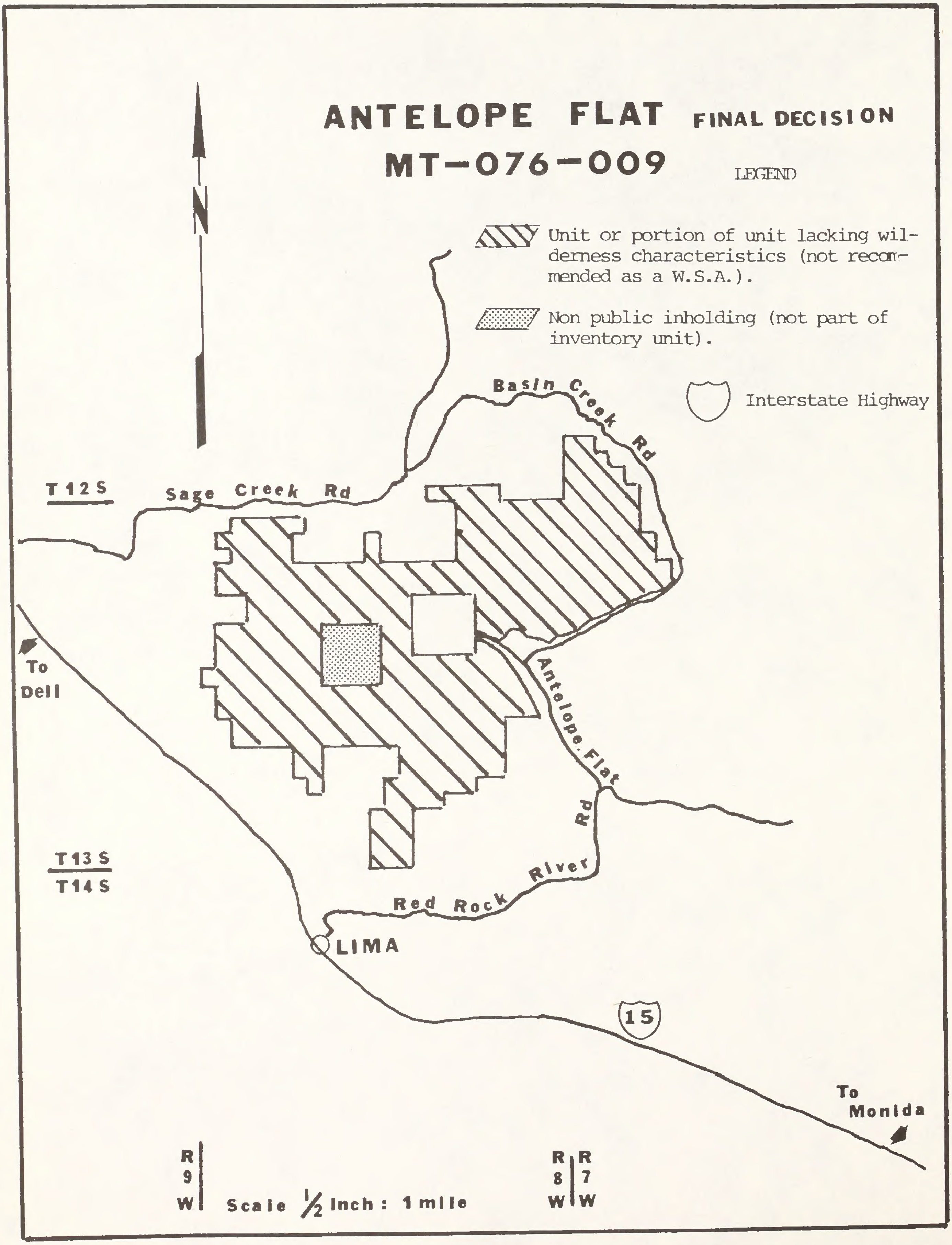
No supplemental values were discernible.

5. Summary of Public Comments:

A small number of comments were received regarding unit 009. No specific wilderness characteristic-related comments were received. Public opinion was split on the decision for study on this unit. The majority did not favor further study.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The area is not recommended for wilderness study due to the significant impacts on apparent naturalness and lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.



ANTELOPE FLAT FINAL DECISION
MT-076-009

LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

▒ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

Interstate Highway

Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-010

Unit Name Basin Creek South

1. Physical Description:

Basin Creek South is located 40 air miles south of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is available by leaving I-15 at the Lima exit and traveling east for eight miles on the Red Rock River Road.

Two boundary adjustments during the intensive inventory increased the total roadless area from 8,595 acres to 11,695 acres. Of the total, 10,815 acres are public land, and 880 acres are state land.

The north and south sides of the area are bounded by private and state lands. The western edge of the area is formed by a road. The eastern portion of the area is a three and one-half mile long finger of land, one-half to one-quarter mile wide, bounded by state and private land.

2. Naturalness:

The central core of the unit is a long ridge which separates Basin Creek from the Red Rock River. Elevations range from 6,649 feet near Basin Creek to 8,739 feet at Clover Divide near the eastern portion of the area.

Approximately 95% of the area is vegetated by grassland species. There are several small patches of Douglas-fir and limber pine clustered in the west central portion of the area.

Human impacts in the area include: a mineral prospect site, revegetated bulldozed firelines, a log building, an old ditch or pipeline berm, significant grazing impacts in the wet drainages, approximately 14 miles of fence, and 22 miles of vehicle ways.

With the exception of fences and vehicle ways, each impact affects only a portion of the unit. However, the spatial distribution of the impacts is such that man's work is evident in most of the area. This characteristic, combined with the frequency and high visibility of vehicle ways and fences, makes the imprint of man's work substantially noticeable throughout the major portion of the area.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The physiographic configuration of the high grassy ridge sloping into broad, flat prairie basins limits opportunities for solitude.

Users on the prairie and open slopes would have little opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of other parties within the area.

Opportunities for primitive recreation are limited. Hiking, hunting, and cross-country skiing are adversely affected by the fences, vehicle ways, and the uniform nature of topography and vegetation.

4. Supplemental Values:

An archaeological site comprised of a small group of teepee rings is present in the northern portion of the area.

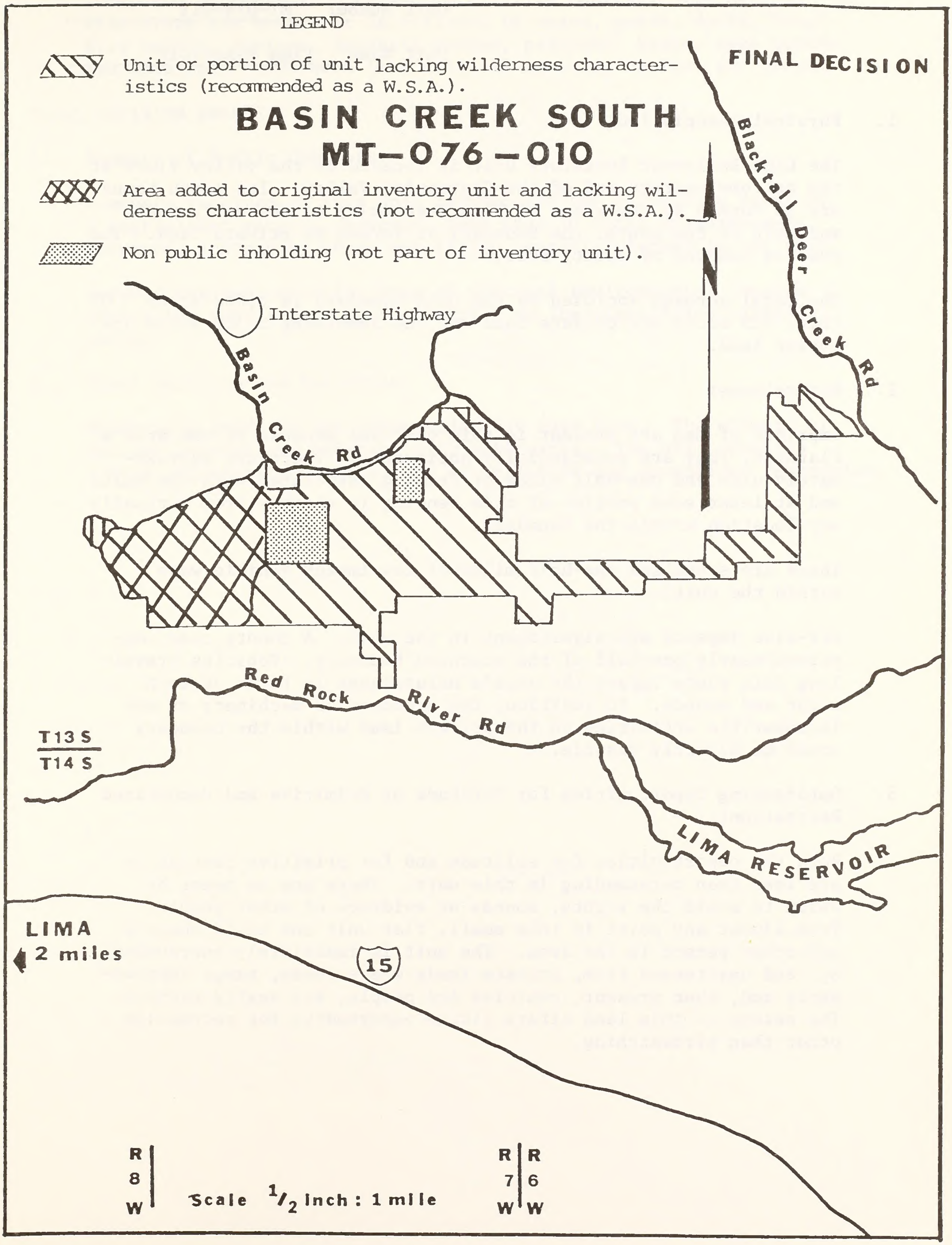
FINAL DECISION ANALYSIS

5. Summary of Public Comment:

Four comments were received relating to unit 010. All were decision-related and opposed further study.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The unit does not appear primarily affected by the forces of nature; man's imprint is substantially noticeable. The limited opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are not outstanding. The unit is not recommended for further wilderness study.


LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (recommended as a W.S.A.).
BASIN CREEK SOUTH
MT-076-010
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
FINAL DECISION
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
N
Basin Creek Rd
Red Rock River Rd
T13 S
T14 S
LIMA RESERVOIR
LIMA
2 miles
15
R 8 W
Scale 1/2 inch : 1 mile
R 7 W
R 6 W

Wilderness Characteristics Narrative Summary

Unit Number MT-076-011

Unit Name Lima Reservoir

1. Physical Description:

The Lima Reservoir Inventory Unit is located on the valley floor at the extreme western end of the Centennial Valley. Its north boundary is formed by the shore of Lima Reservoir; to the east, west, and half of the south, the boundary is formed by private land. The rest is bounded by county road.

The total acreage enclosed by the unit boundary is 5,680 acres. Of this, 320 acres are private land and the remaining 5,360 acres are public land.

2. Naturalness:

Imprints of man are present in this unit and because of the area's flatness, they are substantially noticeable. There are approximately nine and one-half miles of fencing associated with the unit, and at least some portion of this fencing is visible from virtually any location within the boundary.

There are seven and one-half miles of low impact vehicle ways within the unit.

Off-site impacts are significant in the unit. A county road comprises nearly one-half of the southern boundary. Vehicles travelling this route impact the area's naturalness in terms of both sight and sounds. In addition, the presence of machinery or any incompatible activities on the private land within the boundary would be directly visible.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Both the opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation are less than outstanding in this unit. There are no means by which to avoid the sights, sounds or evidence of other people. From almost any point in this small, flat unit one could observe any other person in the area. The unit is immediately surrounded by, and unscreened from, private lands where roads, range improvements and, when present, vehicles and people, are easily visible. The nature of this land offers little opportunity for recreation other than birdwatching.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area supports an outstanding wildlife habitat. The entire area along the reservoir is utilized by swans, geese, ducks, Great Blue herons, curlews, Sandhill cranes, pelicans, hawks, sage grouse and antelope. This area is a critical moulting habitat for geese.

FINAL DECISION ANALYSIS

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Comments received on this unit favored further wilderness study by a significant margin. However, less than 10 total comments were received, indicating there was little overall interest in the unit.

Support was indicated for Area of Critical Environmental Concern review for this area, based primarily on its significant wildlife values.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

Wilderness study is not recommended for this area. The effects of man are present and substantially noticeable. The unit presents little opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

FINAL DECISION

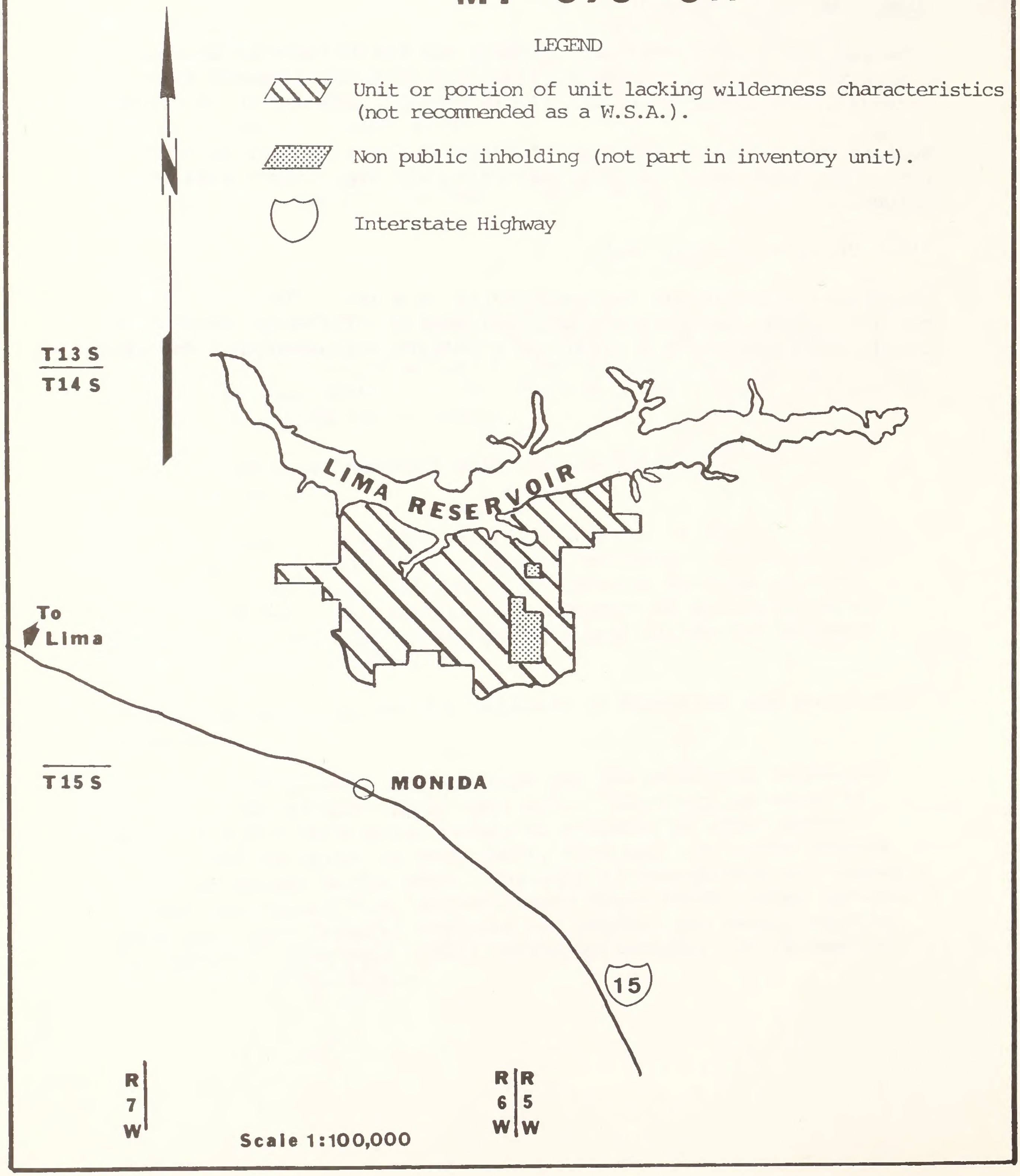
LIMA RESERVOIR
MT-076-011

LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

░ Non public inholding (not part in inventory unit).

⛉ Interstate Highway



Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number: MT-076-015
Unit Name: Red Rock Refuge North

1. Physical Description:

The Red Rock Refuge North Inventory Unit is located four miles north of upper Red Rocks Lake in the Centennial Valley. The northern and eastern boundaries of the unit are contiguous with lands managed by the State of Montana. One half-mile of the southern boundary is contiguous with classified wilderness managed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The remainder of the southern and the western boundaries are formed by the border between public and nonpublic land.

The inventory unit contains 440 acres of public lands. Although this unit is less than 5,000 acres, the size criteria for wilderness study is satisfied by the unit's contiguity with a formally established wilderness area.

The contiguous wilderness is a segment of dry, grass and sagebrush country approximately 2,800 acres in size, separated form the main portion of refuge wilderness by a road running up the north side of the Centennial Valley.

2. Naturalness:

The inventory unit is on a dry, south facing slope rising up off the Centennial Valley floor. Elevation gain is from 6,750 feet along the southern boundary to 7,020 feet in the northeast corner. Hogback ridges covered mostly with bunch grass dominate the unit, with some slopes supporting stands of six to ten feet tall Great Basin Sage.

Although one faint vehicle way is presently running along the eastern border, the area appears to be primarily natural and the imprints of man are substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Although the hogback ridge configuration of most of the unit offers some opportunities for solitude, outstanding opportunities are not present.

Opportunities of primitive recreation within the unit are limited due to the area's small size and lack of diversity.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit contains a relic stand of seven to ten foot tall Great Basin Sage. These plants are of significant botanical interest.

Final Decision Analysis

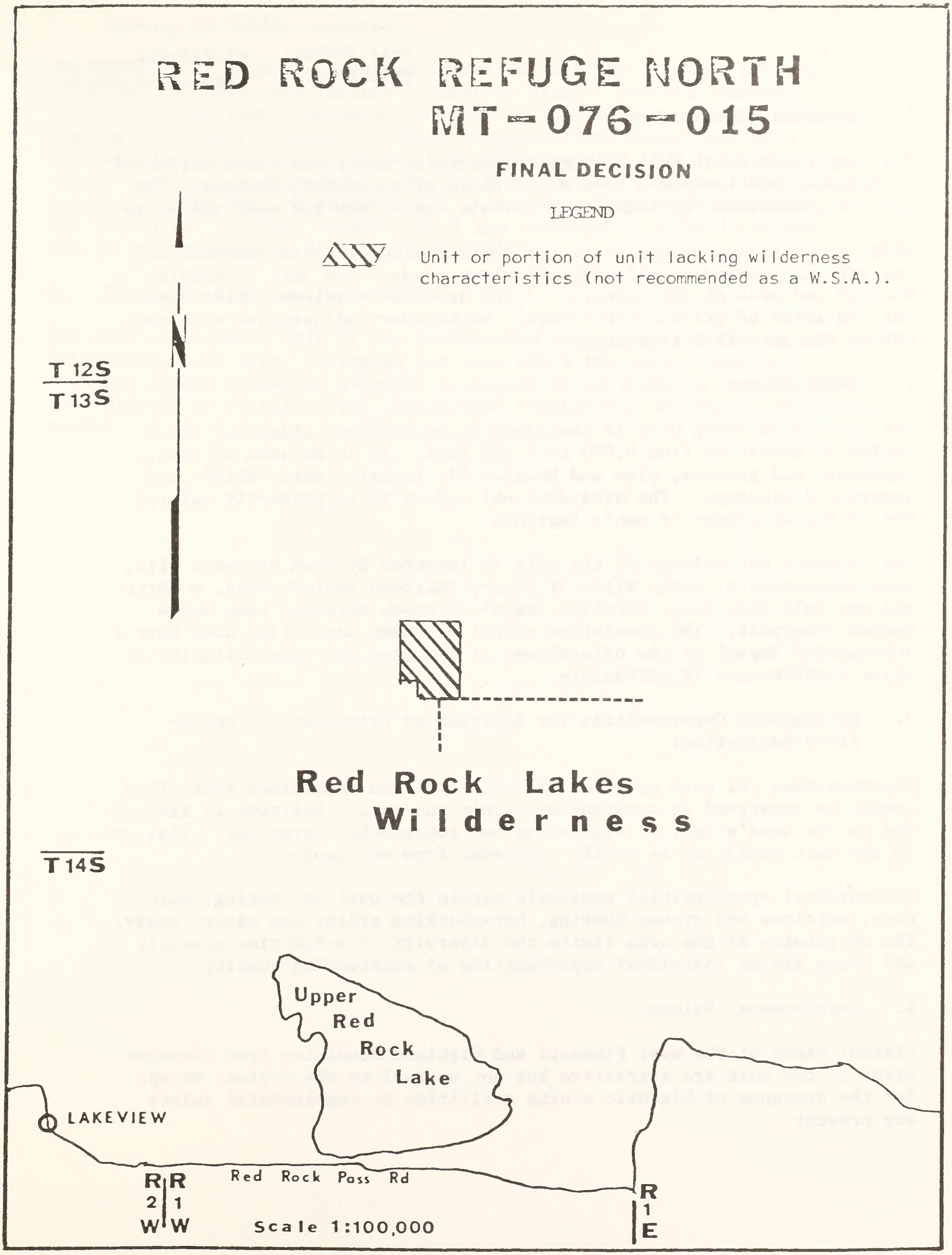
5. Summary of Public Comments

Many Comments were received that felt this unit should be further studied. Most of these comments emphasized factors other than Wilderness characteristics as reasons, particularily wildlife and vegetative values.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

This inventory unit does not display outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. However, the unit is primarily natural, with man's imprints substantially unnoticeable.

Even though this unit does possess supplemental values and is contiguous to an existing Wilderness, it does not possess the necessary Wilderness characteristics to designate it a WSA.


RED ROCK REFUGE NORTH
MT-076-015
FINAL DECISION
LEGEND
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
N
T 12S
T 13S
T 14S
Red Rock Lakes Wilderness
Upper Red Rock Lake
LAKEVIEW
Red Rock Pass Rd
R 2 W
R 1 W
R 1 E
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number: MT-076-024
Unit Name: Camp Creek South

1. Physical Description:

The Camp Creek South Unit is located approximately three miles northeast of Melrose, and two and a half miles north of Rochester, Montana. The area is accessible via county and private roads form the west and south.

With the exception of one state section and eight private ownerships, the unit is bounded on all sides by three roads. The unit boundaries enclose and area of approximately 7,200 acres of roadless public land and 220 acres of private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made during the intensive inventory.

2. Naturalness:

The Camp Creek South Unit is dominated by an eastwest ridgeline which varies in elevation from 6,000 to 7,500 feet. It is an area of open, sagebrush and grasses, pine and Douglas fir forests, sheer cliffs and numerous draingages. The area does not appear to be primarily natural due to the abundance of man's imprints.

The apparent naturalness of the unit is impacted by open prospect pits, mine developments, forty miles of fence, thirteen vehicle ways, a three and one half mile water pipeline (berm), a stock watering tank and a dammed reservoir. The cumulative effect of these activities does have a substantial impact on the naturalness of the area and rehabilitation of major disturbances is unfeasible.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation cannot be construed as outstanding within the unit. Solitude is limited due to the area's lack of vegetative and topographic screening. Visitors in the unit could not be easily separated from one another.

Recreational opportunities available within the unit are hiking, mule deer, antelope and grouse hunting, horsebacking riding and nature study. The attributes of the area limits the diversity of activities possible and there are no individual opportunities of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

Distant views of the West Pioneers and Highland Mountains from elevated areas of the unit are attractive but not unusual to the region. Except for the presence of historic mining activities no supplemental values are present.

Final Decision Rationale

5. Summary of Public Comments:

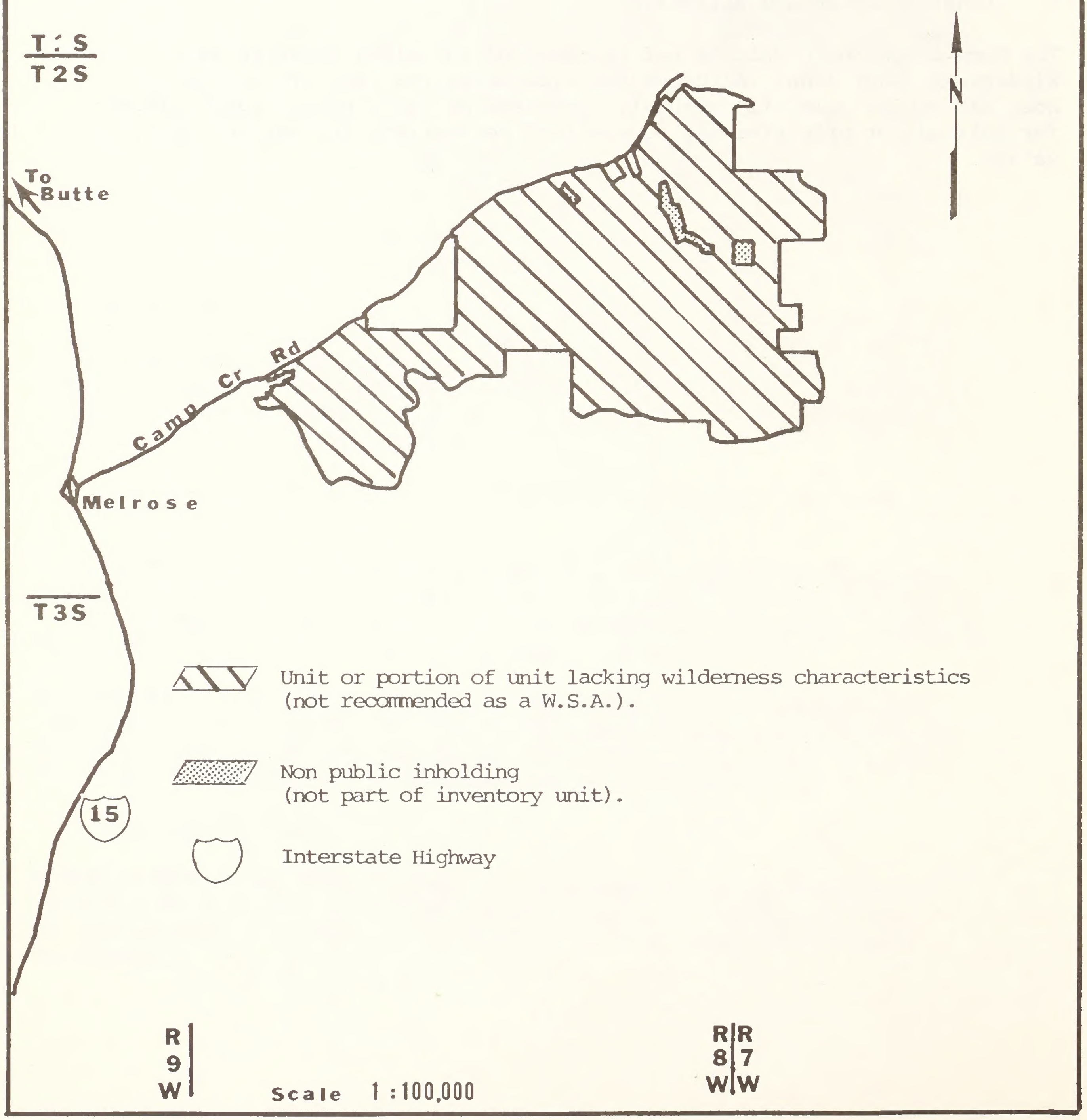
The majority of comments received concurred with the Bureau's proposal to remove the area form further Wilderness Study. Several comments addressed study plan considerations such as interminged private inholdings, grazing and timber potential. These considerations would have been assessed during the Study Phase. One comment stated that the unit should have been combined with the Nez Perce Hollow Unit and inventoried together. This was not possible due to an identified road separating the two units. Another comment cited the presence of wildlife values due to the presence of Bighorn Sheep habitat.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Camp Creek South Unit is not recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. Although the area meets the size criteria,it does not appear primarily natural, possesses no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and has no supplemental values.

CAMP CREEK SOUTH FINAL DECISION

MT-076-024


T : S
T2S
To Butte
N
Camp Cr Rd
Melrose
T3S
15
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
R 9 W
R 8 W
R 7 W
Scale 1 :100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-025

Unit Name McCartney Mtn./
Sandy Hollow

1. Physical Description:

This area was originally described as two units in the initial inventory announcement (April, 1979). Roads which were thought to separate the area into units 058, McCartney Mountain and 025, Sandy Hollow, were found not to exist after completion of the field inventory. The units were then combined to form one unit, Unit 025, McCartney Mountain/Sandy Hollow. This new unit is located 17 miles north of Dillon, Montana. It is accessible by county roads and with owner's permission, by private dirt roads from I-15 and State Highway 41.

The northern and eastern boundaries are formed by private and state land. The western and southern boundaries are formed by private land and Burma road. These boundaries enclose some 16,380 acres of public land, 640 acres of state land, and approximately 560 acres of private land.

2. Naturalness:

The McCartney Mountain/Sandy Hollow Unit comprises steep, timbered slopes, open grasslands, many drainages, and some unique geological formations. Elevation ranges from 8,364 feet on McCartney Mountain to 4,850 feet near the southern boundary.

A great number of impacts are located both on the unit and the inholdings within the unit. Human impacts in the area include: mining activities, vehicle ways, fences, spring developments, junk automobiles, refuse sites, several abandoned cabins, a 200 foot long water diversion ditch and a ¼ mile long transmission line.

The spatial distribution of these impacts is such that man's work is evident in most of the area. Due to the cumulative effect of these human imprints the overall naturalness of the unit is significantly impacted.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The many gulches in the southeastern portion of the unit combined with the densely forested slopes and deep drainages in the northern portion provide excellent opportunities for solitude.

Backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, sightseeing of geological features, nature study and photography are all excellent primitive recreational opportunities found in the McCartney Mountain/Sandy Hollow area. Depending on snow conditions, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing could also be outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

This area contains year-round habitat for elk and is used by deer during the summer, fall, and winter. In the northcentral part of the unit is located a crucial elk calving ground. The southeastern portion of the area is used for nesting by raptors.

In the southeast corner of the unit is the evidence of Indian cultures in the form of drive alignment cairns and rock walls associated with a pishkun or buffalo jump near the Big Hole River. Upthrusted rock ridges, also in the southeastern portion of the area, are unique geological features.

Final Decision Analysis

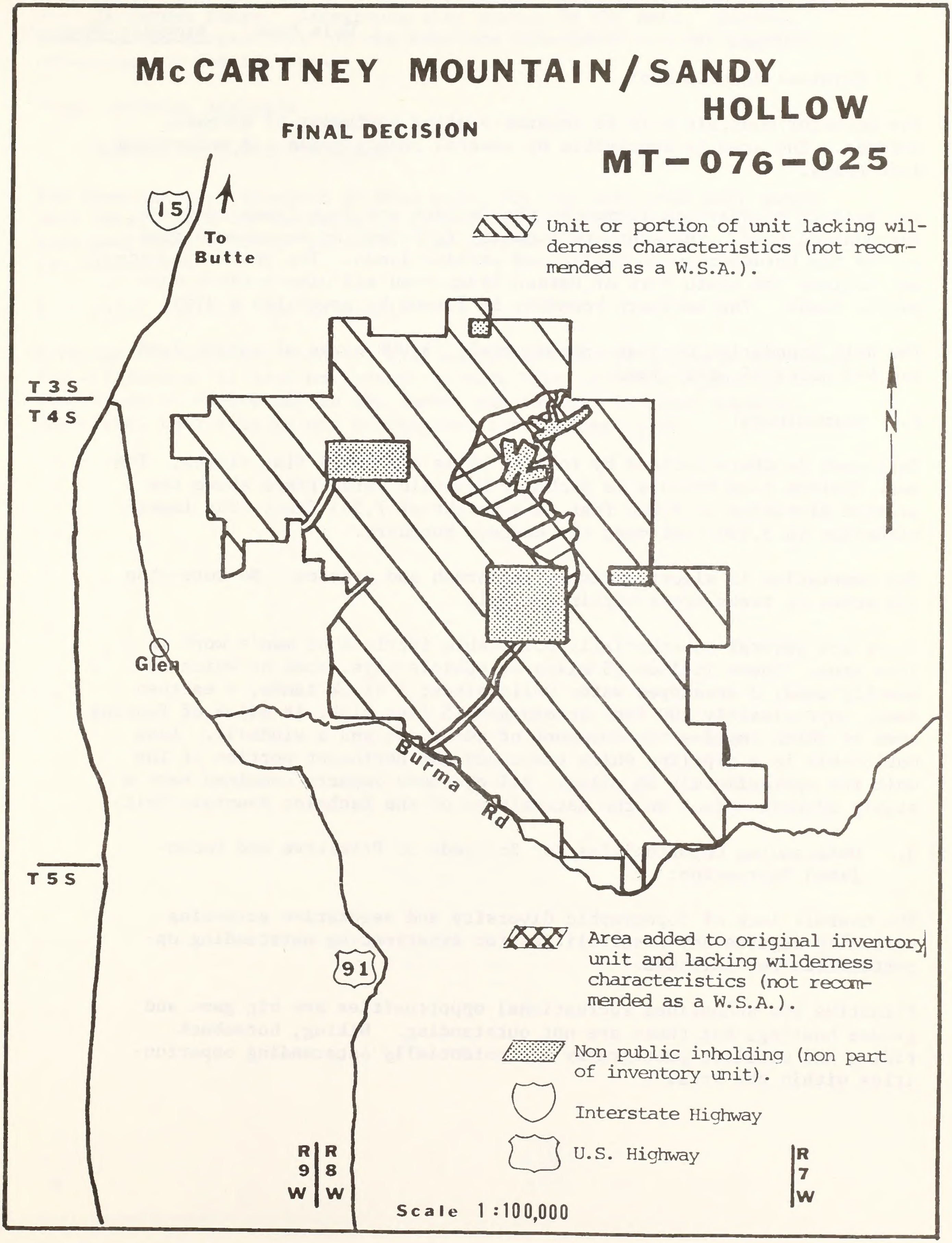
5. Summary of Public Comments

A number of individuals commenting on this unit stated that it was heavily impacted by vehicle ways and effects of past mining activities. Three individuals commented that although the unit contains impacts of man, the size of unit and the relative density of the impacts did not substantially detract from the apparent naturalness. Study phase considerations were cited such as grazing, potential for mineral discovery and timber harvesting.

Several individuals stated that opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude were lacking or marginal. Other individuals mentioned the presence of wildlife and archeological values as characteristics which lent support to a wilderness study designation.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

This unit will be dropped from wilderness consideration. The area is substantially impacted by man's activities and no longer appears natural. Many of the public comments received support the rationale for this decision.



McCARTNEY MOUNTAIN/SANDY HOLLOW

FINAL DECISION

MT-076-025

15
To Butte
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
T 3 S
T 4 S
N
Glen
Burma Rd
T 5 S
91
▩ Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
▒ Non public inholding (non part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
U.S. Highway
R 9 W
R 8 W
R 7 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-029

Unit Name Bachelor Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Bachelor Mountain Unit is located 5 miles southwest of Bannack, Montana. The area is accessible by several county roads and unimproved dirt roads.

The eastern boundary is formed by the Bannack and Sage Creek road and one unnamed road. The southern boundary is formed by an unnamed road and by the border between public and private lands. The western boundary follows the South Fork of Watson Creek road and also borders non-public lands. The northern boundary is formed by powerline M 0385.

The unit boundaries enclose approximately 13,000 acres of public land and 640 acres of state land.

2. Naturalness:

This area is characterized by rolling hills and broad flat ridges. The most obvious land feature is Bachelor Mountain which rises above the average elevation of 6,000 feet to a height of 7,563 feet. The lowest elevation is 5,920 feet near the eastern boundary.

The vegetation is almost entirely sagebrush and grasses. No more than 150 acres of trees occur within the unit.

There are several substantially noticeable imprints of man's work in this area. These include 25 miles of vehicle ways, some of which are heavily used; 3 developed water wells sites; 2 stock tanks; 4 earthen dams, approximately 100 feet across and 15 feet high; 18 miles of fencing, some of which impedes the movement of antelope; and a windmill. Less noticeable is a pipeline which traverses the northeast portion of the unit for approximately 3½ miles. All of these impacts combined have a highly adverse affect on the naturalness of the Bachelor Mountain Unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The overall lack of topographic diversity and vegetative screening virtually negates any possibilities for experiencing outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities are big game and grouse hunting, but these are not outstanding. Hiking, horseback riding and wildlife photography are potentially outstanding opportunities within the area.

4. Supplemental Values:

Portions of the unit serve as antelope summer and winter range, and deer and elk winter range. Sagegrouse also winter in the unit. Several spots in the eastern half of the area are considered crucial sagegrouse strutting and nesting areas.

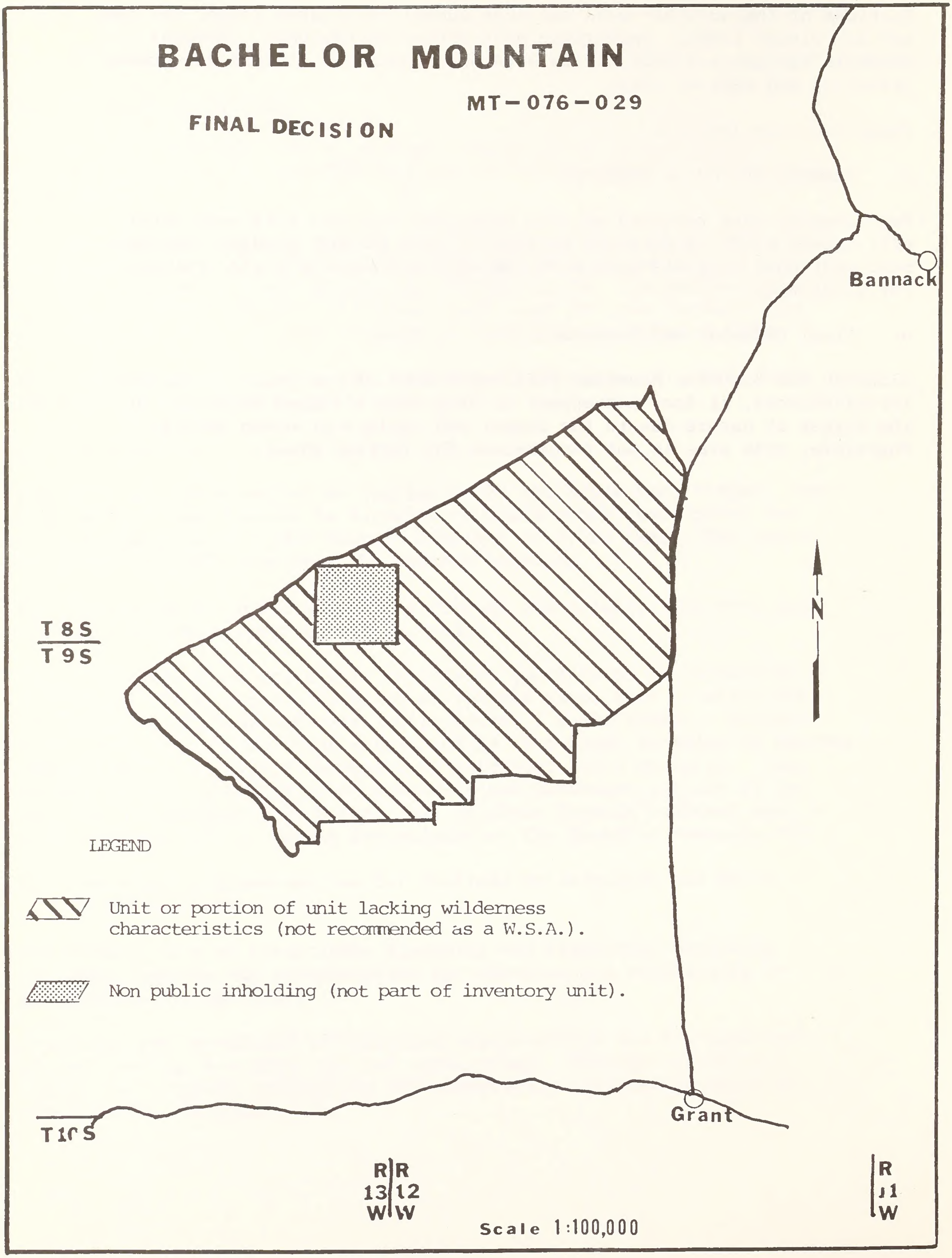
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

Few comments were received on this unit, but the ones that were generally agreed with the decision to drop it from further study. One comment mentioned wildlife values of the unit but this is not a criteria for wilderness.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

Although the Bachelor Mountain Unit meets some of the criteria necessary for wilderness, it does not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature due to the number and variety of human impacts. Therefore, this area is not recommended for further study.


BACHELOR MOUNTAIN
MT–076–029
FINAL DECISION
Bannack
N
T 8 S
T 9 S
T 10 S
Grant
R 13 W
R 12 W
R 11 W
Scale 1:100,000
LEGEND
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
░ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number; MT-076-031
Unit Name: Cold Spring Creek

1. Physical Description:

Cold Spring Creek is located ten air miles southwest of Dillon, Montana. It is separated from Inventory Unit #28, Henneberry Ridge, by private lands along Grasshopper Creek. The unit contains 7,100 acres of public land. It is bounded to the south by private lands along Grasshopper Creek and the north, east and west by established roads. Configuration of the unit is narrow and somewhat irregular. The northern end of the unit is generally less than one mile wide while the southern end near Grasshopper Creek is two and one-half miles wide.

The area can be reached by a County road leading south from Highway 43, ten miles west of Dillon.

2. Naturalness:

Topographically, Cold Spring Creek has two distinct land forms; a central upland plateau-like area of rolling hills, and a series of deep gulches and canyons leading from the plateau to the north, west and south. This somewhat rugged topography was formed from the erosion of an ancient volcanic cone. Vegetation is 90 percent sagebrush and grasses, with small patches of lodgepole pine trees in the southern part of the area. Elevations range from 5,600 feet to 7,036 feet.

Impacts consist of a powerline crossing the unit in the northern end for one and one-half miles; seven and one-half miles of vehicle ways; past mining disturbances near Grasshopper Creek; nine and one-half miles of fenceline, and a number of small disturbed areas in the center of the unit where past drilling has occurred to sample mineral resources. The fences and vehicle ways are highly visible when travelling within the unit and have a definite negative impact on apparent naturalness. Because of the spotted distribution of the various impacts, and the relatively small size of the unit, there are virtually no areas within the unit where human impact cannot be observed.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The unit generally lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude. Although opportunities in the southern one-third of the area are outstanding, the small size of this portion does not compensate for the lack of opportunities throughout the rest of the unit.

Types of primitive recreation that occur on this unit are hunting and day hiking. Opportunities exist for horseback riding, winter sports, and sightseeing. None would be considered outstanding.

4. Supplemental Values:

Grasshopper Creek Canyon shows evidence of historic mining activity. No other values of significance were identified.

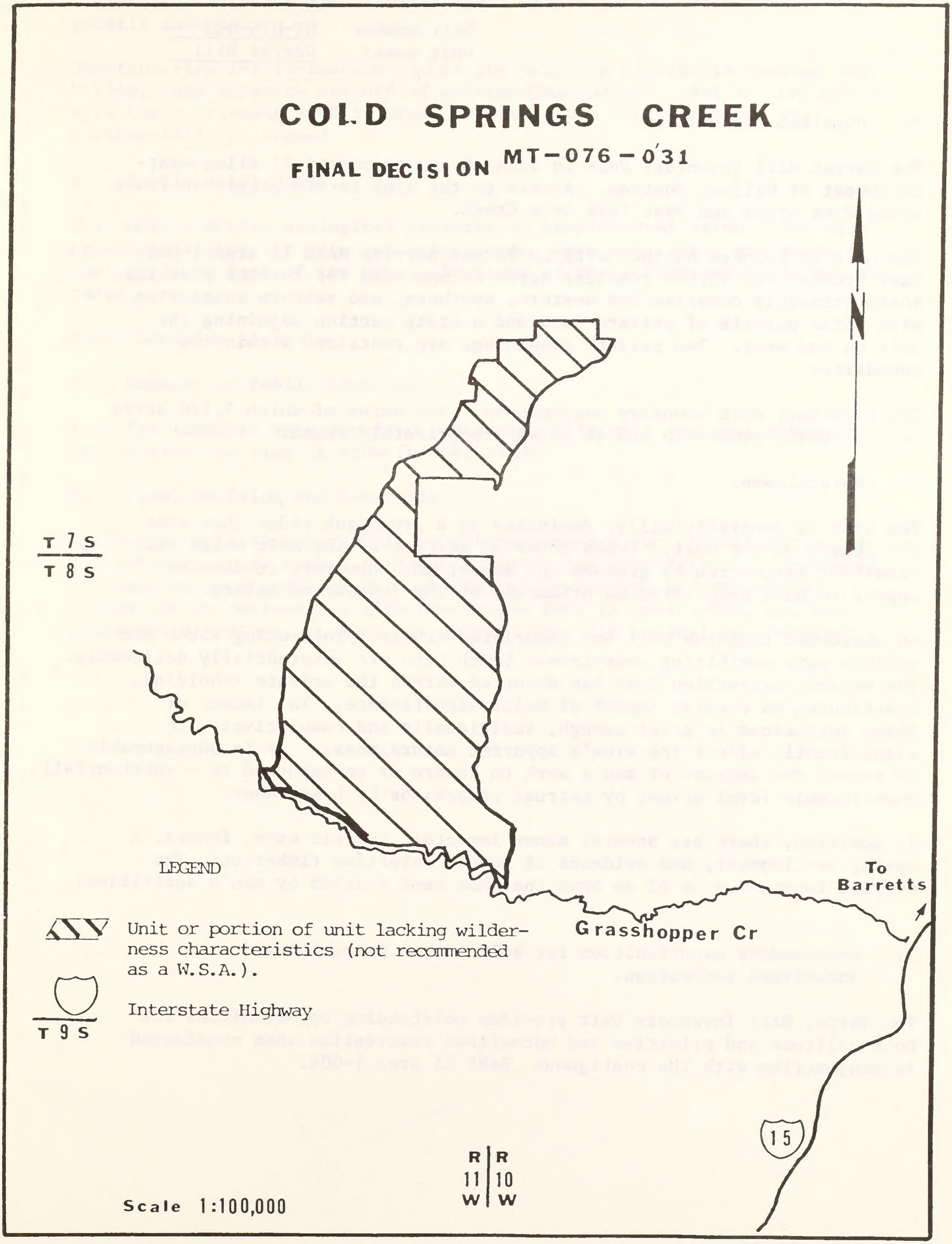
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

Very few comments were received concerning this unit. Most agreed that it should be dropped. One comment said that it should be considered as part of unit MT-076-028, Henneberry Ridge. Since it is separated from Henneberry Ridge by private land, it cannot be considered contiguous.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

The area is not recommended for further wilderness study. It lacks naturalness and does not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.


COLD SPRINGS CREEK
FINAL DECISION
MT-076-031
T 7 S
T 8 S
T 9 S
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Interstate Highway
15
To Barretts
Grasshopper Cr
R 11 W
R 10 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit number: MT-076-033
Unit name: Garret Hill

1. Physical description:

The Garret Hill Inventory Unit is located approximately 21 miles west-northwest of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is via primitive roads along Dyce Creek and West Fork Dyce Creek.

The unit is bounded on the north by Forest Service RARE II area 1-008, East Pioneer, of 93,859 roadless acres recommended for further planning. Roads primarily comprise the western, southern, and eastern boundaries with three parcels of private land and a state section adjoining the unit on the west. Two private inholdings are contained within the boundaries.

The inventory unit boundary encompasses 1,160 acres of which 1,120 acres are in public ownership and 40 acres are privately owned.

2. Naturalness:

The area is generally hilly, dominated by a prominent ridge that runs the length of the unit. Trees cover 50 percent of the unit while the remainder is covered by grasses and sagebrush. However, it does not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces. of nature.

An abandoned tungsten mill and associated debris, prospecting sites and vehicle ways exhibiting conspicuous bench cuts are substantially noticeable. The mineral extraction that has occurred within the private inholdings constitutes an outside impact of major significance. The impact of these intrusions is great enough, individually and cumulatively, to significantly affect the area's apparent naturalness. It is unreasonable to expect the imprint of man's work to return or be returned to a substantially unnoticeable level either by natrual process or by hand labor.

In addition, there are several minor impacts: vehicle ways, fences, a spring development, and evidence of an old selective timber cut. The overall impression is of an area that has been scarred by man's activities.

3. Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation:

The Garret Hill Inventory Unit provides outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined reacreation when considered in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area 1-008.

By itself, the unit's narrow configuration and density of man-made intrusions are a hindrance to the realization of solitude. However, in conjunction with the East Pioneer area, opportunities for solitude are greatly enhanced.

Opportunities for recreation within the unit are limited to hunting and hiking, both of which are not of outstanding quality. But in conjunction with the contiguous RARE II area, opportunities for recreation are substantially increased.

4. Supplemental vaues;

This unit contains ecological features of supplemental value. The area provides habitat for sage and blue grouse, antelope, deer, and moose during all or part of the year. Portions of the unit provide elk winter range.

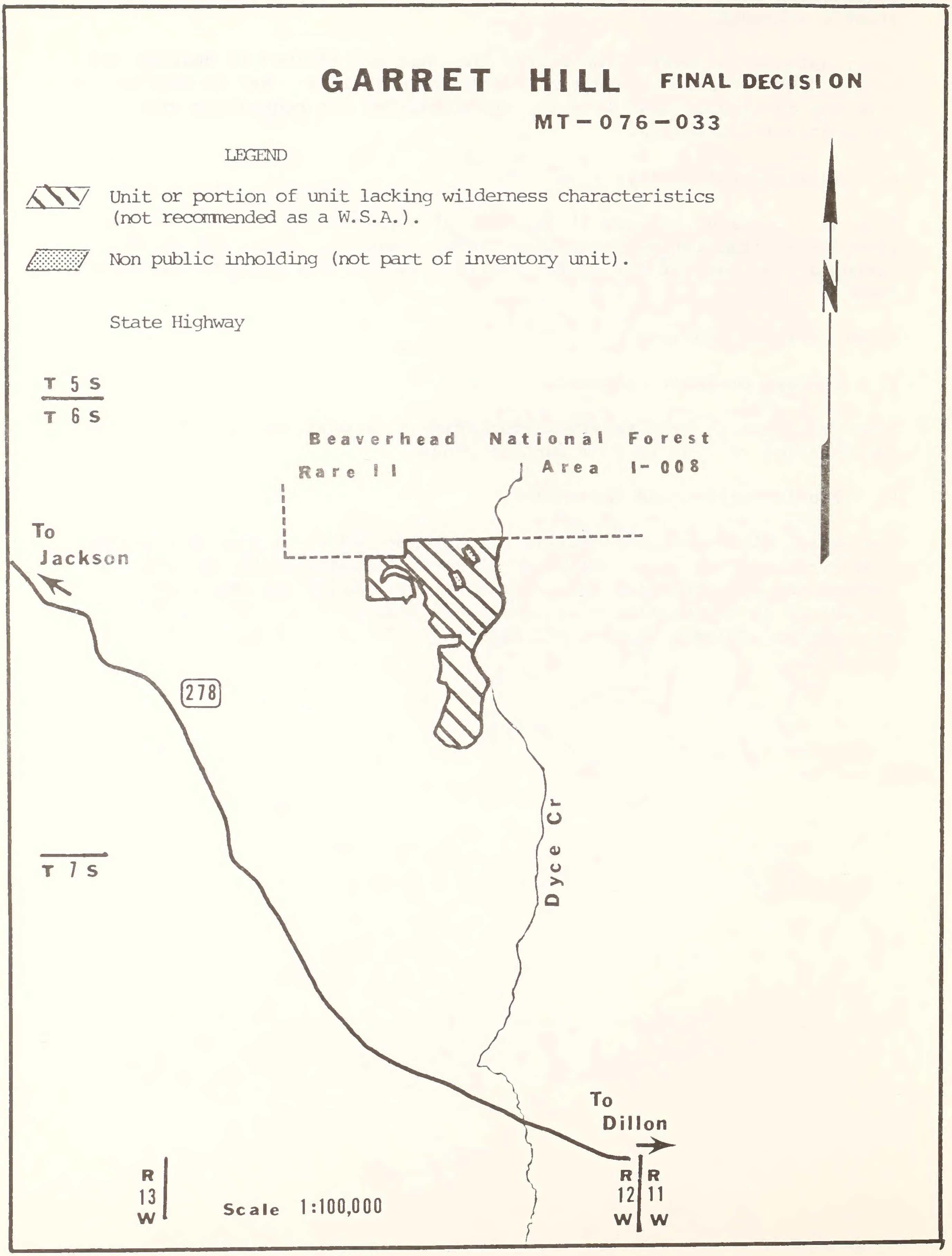
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Very few comments were received concerning this unit and most supported the decision to drop it from further study.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Garret Hill Inventory Unit is not recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. Although it meets the size criteria, possesses outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in conjunction with contiguous RARE II area 1-008, and has supplemental values, it does not appear primarily natural in character.



GARRET HILL FINAL DECISION

MT-076-033

LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

▒ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

State Highway

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number: MT-076-042
Unit Name: Red Rock River Islands #2

1. Physical Description:

The Red Rock River Islands Inventory Unit is located on the Red Rock River in the Centennial Valley, about 5 miles down river from the outlet of lower Red Rocks Lake. Access to these islands is either by boat or by the northside county road.

The unit is comprised of 5 islands totalling 3 or 4 acres. One island islocated approximately one-quarter mile downstream from the other four, which are clustered closely together. The river here is no more that 60 feet wide and the islands are separated from shore by channels less than 10 feet wide.

The islands and surrounding land are all in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

All five islands appear to be primarily natural and untrammeled be works of man. They are entirely covered by tall marshy grass. The islands do not appear to be grazed by cattle, perhaps because of the undesirability of this variety of marsh grass.

The islands are located where offsite intrusions are significant: all the islands are located less than 200 yards from, and in direct view of, the county road that runs up the north side of the Centennial Valley.

The downstream island is surrounded by cattle allotments and a highly visible jack-leg fence runs down to the river within 50 yards of it.

The upper islands are approached within 20 yards by a vehicle-way where it accesses a cattle watering yard. The yard consists of double jack-legged fence which crosses the river. This development is 20 yards upstream and in direct view from the islands.

3. Outstanding Opportunity for Solitude of Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

There is simply little opportuity for solitude inherent in these islands. Their proximity to fences, stock developments and a gravel road, in combination with their small size does not support a sense of solitude. Because of the size of these islands and their previously discussed surroundings, the opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation is negligible.

4. Supplemental Values:

This unit contains no unique ecological, geological or other features of educational, scenic, or historical value.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

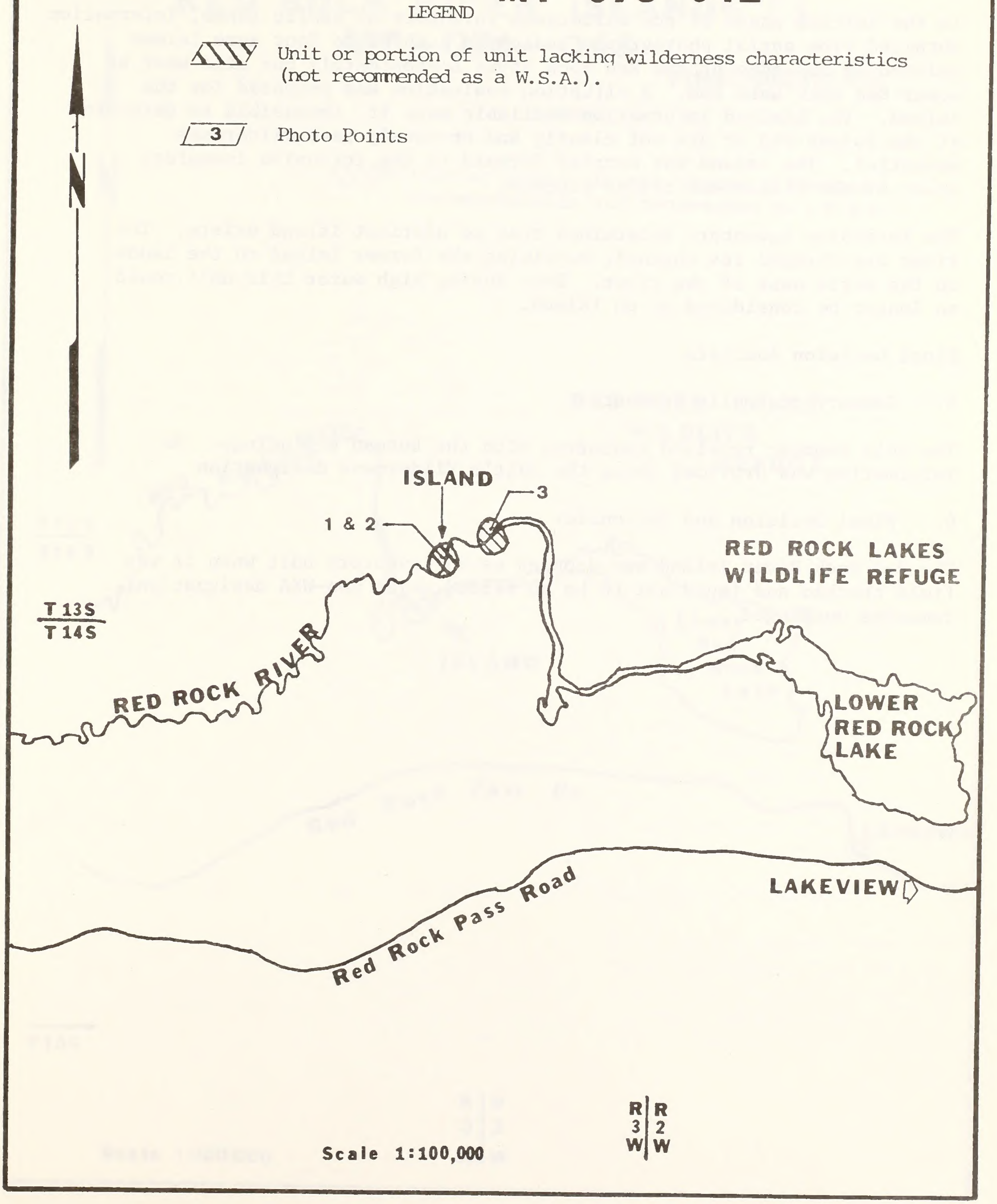
The only comment received concurred with the Bureau's findings. No information was provided about the unit's wilderness designation .

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

Although the Red Rock River Island meets the size criteria, it is not primarily natural and possesses no outstanding opportunities for solitued or primitive and unconfined recreation. The non-WSA designation remains unchanged.

RED ROCK RIVER ISLAND # 2 FINAL DECISION

MT-076-042



LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

/ 3 / Photo Points

Unit Number: MT-076-043
Unit Name: Red Rock River Islands #1

Physical Description:

In the initial phase of the wilderness inventory of public lands, information obtained from aerial photographs indicated a three to four acre island existed on the edge of the Red Rock River approximately one mile west of Lower Red Rock Lake Dam. A situation evaluation was prepared for the island. The limited information available made it impossible to determine if the island did or did not clearly and obviously have wilderness potential. The island was carried forward to the intensive inventory phase of the wilderness review process.

The intensive inventory determined that no distinct island exists. The river has changed its channel, rejoining the former island to the lands on the north bank of the river. Even during high water this unit could no longer be considered as an island.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

The only comment received concurred with the Bureau's findings. No information was provided about the unit's Wilderness designation

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

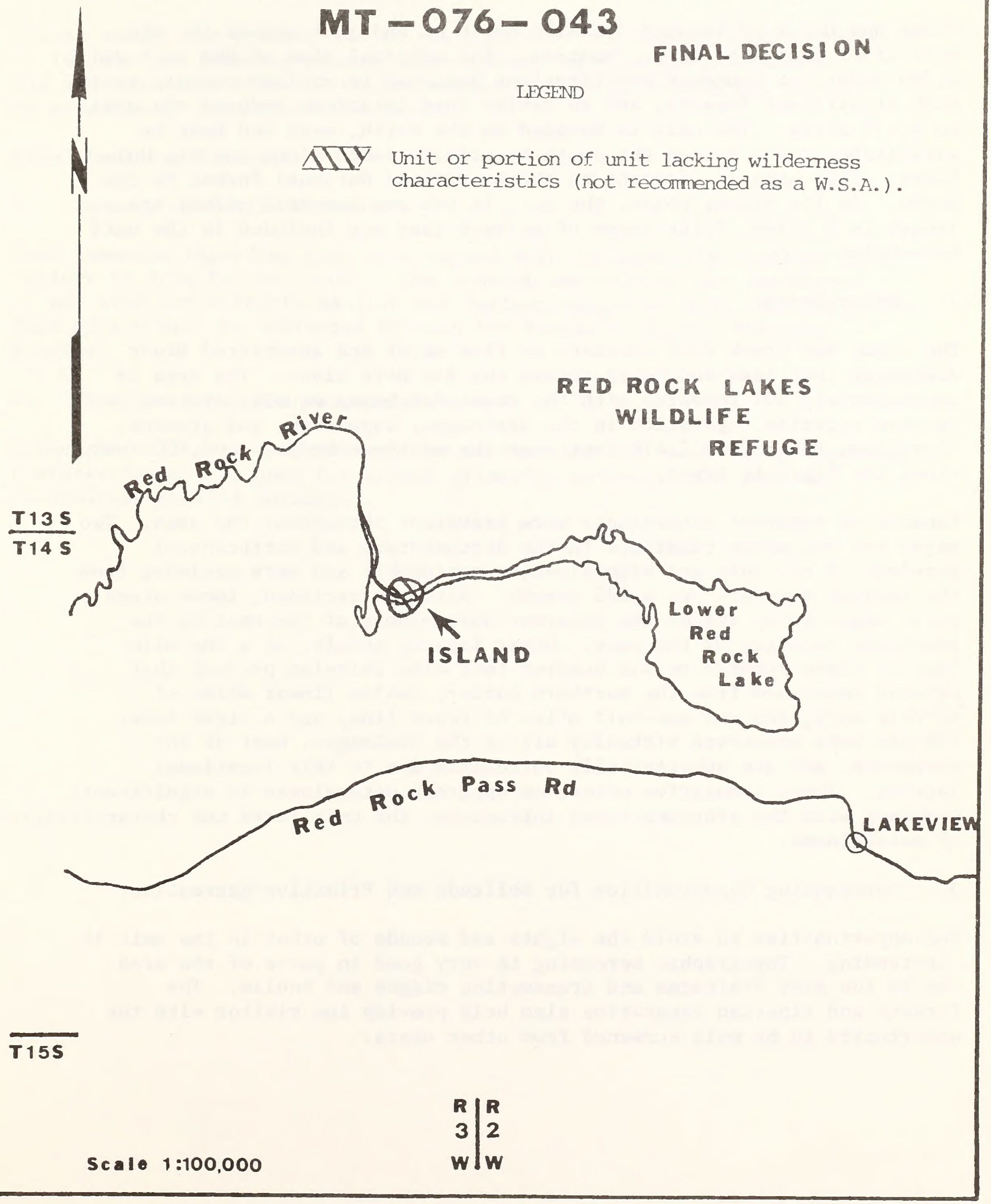
The Red Rock River Island was dropped as an inventory unit when it was field checked and found not to be an island. The non-WSA designation remanins unchanged.

RED ROCK RIVER ISLANDS #1
MT-076-043

FINAL DECISION

LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number: MT-076-047
Unit Name: Jimmy New Creek

1. Physical Description:

Jimmy New Creek is located one mile north of and just across the Big Hole River from Wise River, Montana. The original size of the unit was 6,320 acres but boundary modifications designed to exclude certain areas with significant impacts, and to revise road locations reduced the area to 6,275 acres. The unit is bounded on the north, east and west by established roads and on the south by private lands along the Big Hole River. Ther area is adjacent to the Beaverhead National Forest to the north. At its widest point, the unit is two and one-half miles; its length is 6 miles. Forty acres of private land are included in the unit boundaries.

2. Naturalness:

The Jimmy New Creek Unit consists of five major and associated minor drainages that lead southward toward the Big Hole River. The area is approximately 50% forested with the remainder being equally divided between riparian vegetation in the drainages, sagebrush, and grasses. Elevations range from 7,474 feet near the northern border to 5,600 feet along the Big Hole River.

Impacts on apparent naturalness were prevalent throughout the area. Two major and two minor clearcuts in the northeastern and northcentral portions of the unit are significantly noticeable and were excluded from the revised boundary (of 6,275 acres). Although excluded, these areas still negativeley affect the apparent naturalness of the unit in the immediate vicinity of the cuts. Other impacts consist of a one mile long by three hundred to six hundred foot wide thinning project that extends southward from the northern border; twelve linear miles of vehicle ways; two and one-half miles of fence line, and a stock tank. Vehicle ways penetrate virtually all of the drainages, most of the ridgetops, and are substantially noticeable due to this locational pattern. Their cumulative effect on apparent naturalness is significant; combined with the aforementioned intrusions, the unit lacks the characteristics of naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation:

The opportunities to avoid the sights and sounds of other in the unit is outstanding. Topographic screening is very good in parts of the area due to the many drainages and transecting ridges and knolls. The forests and riparian vegetation also help provide the visitor with the opportunity to be well screened from other users.

Primitive recreation opportunities are present, but are not outstanding. Hunting and wildlife viewing opportunities are available as this area is critical winter range for mule deer and elk and also supports a large population of blue grouse. Hiking opportunities are also present due to the diversity of terrain and variety of vegetation, but are not of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

Scenic values are present due to the numerous rock outcroppings, diversity of terrain and forested patches interspersed with sagebrush meadows. Elk and mule deer critical winter range presents an ecological feature of educational and scientific value.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Most comments regarding this unit agreed with the Bureau's findings to exclude it from furthur study. One comment emphasizied the importance of the area for wildlife habitat and furthur suggested ACEC identification. This option will be evaluated through the Bureau's regular Planning Process.

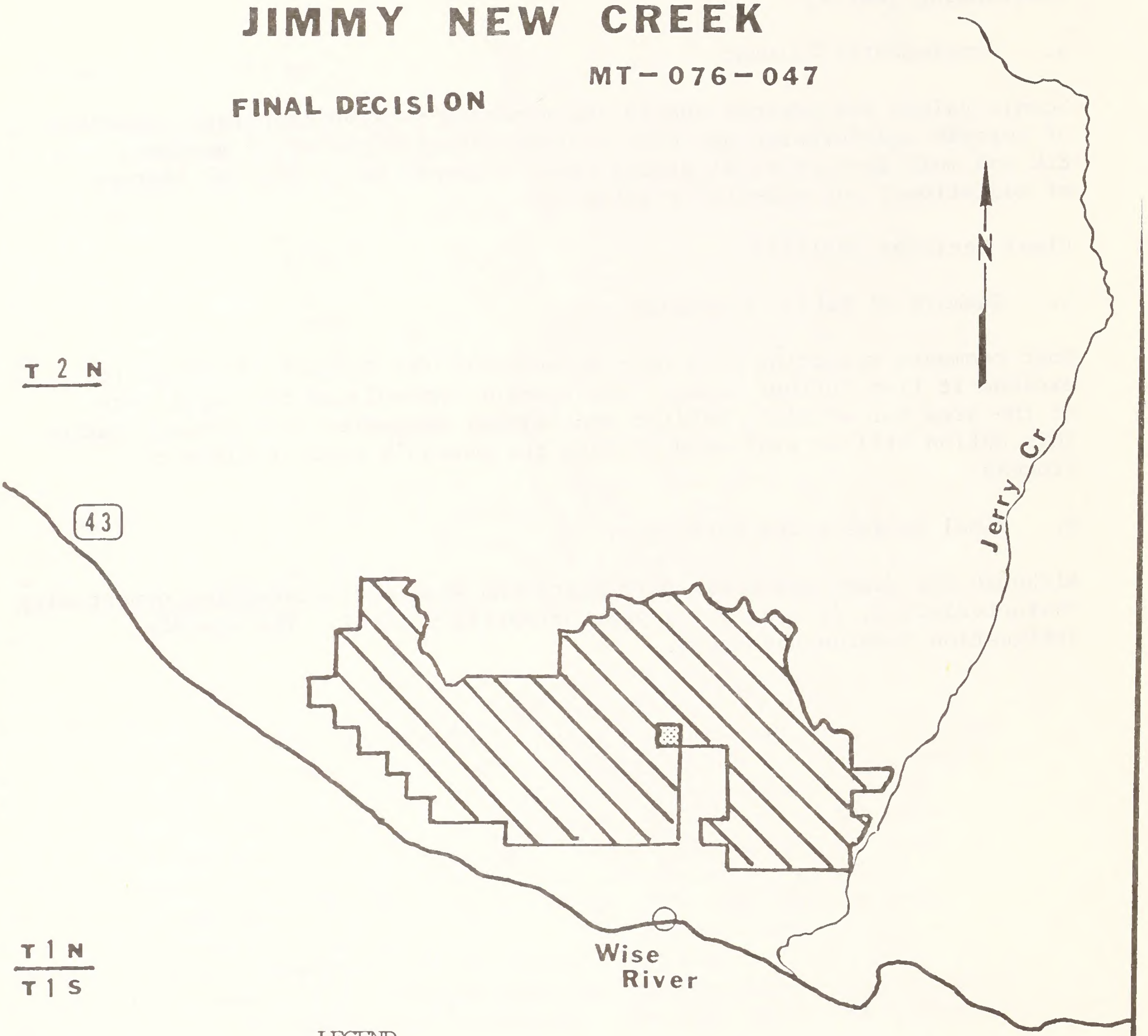
6. Final Decision and Rationale:

Although the Jimmy New Creek unit meets the size and outstanding opportunity characteristics, it does not appear primarily natural. The non-WSA designation remains unchanged.

JIMMY NEW CREEK

MT-076-047

FINAL DECISION



LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

▱ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

▢ State Highway

R 12 W

R 11 W | R 10 W

Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-051

Unit Name Maiden Rock Islands

1. Physical Description:

There are two islands comprising the Maiden Rock Islands Inventory Unit on the Big Hole River. The area is accessible to the public via the Moose Creek exit off Interstate 15. The two islands are approximately one mile apart, and both are near midstream. The unit boundary encompasses less than one acre of land entirely in public ownership.

2. Naturalness:

Both islands are in a natural state. There are no signs of human activity anywhere on either island. The islands are flat, predominately covered by willows, with some cottonwoods and grasses. There is an off-site intrusion significantly noticeable from throughout both islands. A railroad track lies from 1/8 to 1/4 mile east from the center of each island. Trains pass by daily, and their proximity detracts substantially from the area's naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Maiden Rock Islands do not provide outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Due to their small size and flat topography visitors cannot screen themselves from each other's view. In addition, is the proximity of the railroad track which destroys any opportunity for solitude. The primitive and unconfined types of recreation available on the islands are riverboat camping and fishing, with neither being of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

No supplemental values are known to exist.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

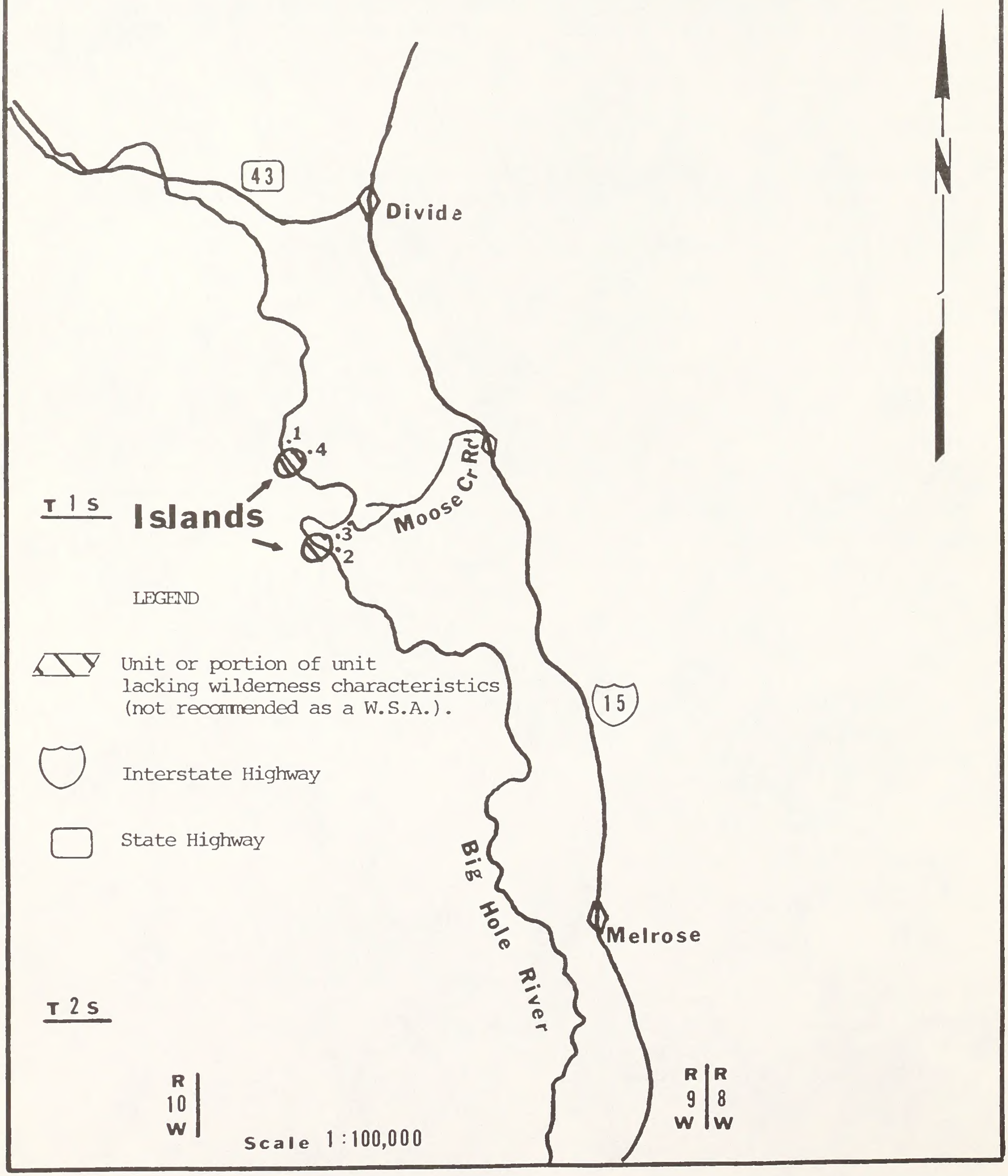
Only two comments were received concerning this unit and both supported the proposed decision.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Maiden Rock Islands are not recommended to be further studied as a WSA. Their size is insufficient so as to make practicable their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition. Their natural character is substantially affected by the close proximity of a railroad line, and they do not offer any outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

MAIDEN ROCK ISLANDS

MT-076-051 FINAL DECISION



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-054

Unit Name Nez Perce Hollow

1. Physical Description

The Nez Perce Hollow Unit is located approximately four miles east of Melrose and seven miles west of Twin Bridges, Montana. The area is accessible via county and private roads from east and west.

With the exception of one state section and eight private ownerships, the unit is entirely bounded by public and private roads. The original inventory unit contained 9,750 acres of public land and 200 acres of private inholdings.

During the intensive inventory three boundary adjustments were made based on road criteria. Two small deletions totaling 152 acres were made in the southwest and west central edges of the unit due to the presence of interior roads. One large addition of approximately 3,145 acres was attached to the original southeast, corner because the boundary way did not meet the road criteria status.

The net result of these adjustments increased the size of the area by 2,993 acres. The new boundaries enclose a total area of approximately 12,743 acres of roadless public land and 40 acres of private inholdings.

2. Naturalness:

Nez Perce Hollow Unit is characterized by rolling sagebrush and grass covered hills dissected by shallow, dry drainages. Average elevations vary from prairies of 6,000 feet to hilltops of 6,600 feet. The area does not appear to be primarily natural due to the abundance of man's imprints.

The apparent naturalness of the unit is impacted by ten miles of vehicle ways, sixteen miles of fences, numerous range improvements (including a windmill, a large, rainwater catchment and numerous watering tanks), mine developments and open, prospect pits. The cumulative effect of these activities do have a substantial impact on the naturalness of the area. Rehabilitation of the major disturbances is unfeasible.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation cannot be construed as outstanding within the unit. Solitude is limited due to the lack of vegetative and topographic screening. Visitors within any portion of the unit could not be secluded from the sights and sounds of other users.

Recreational opportunities available within the unit are horseback riding, day hiking, and antelope hunting. The attributes of the area limit the diversity of activities possible and there are no individual opportunities of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

There are no features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic value known within the area.

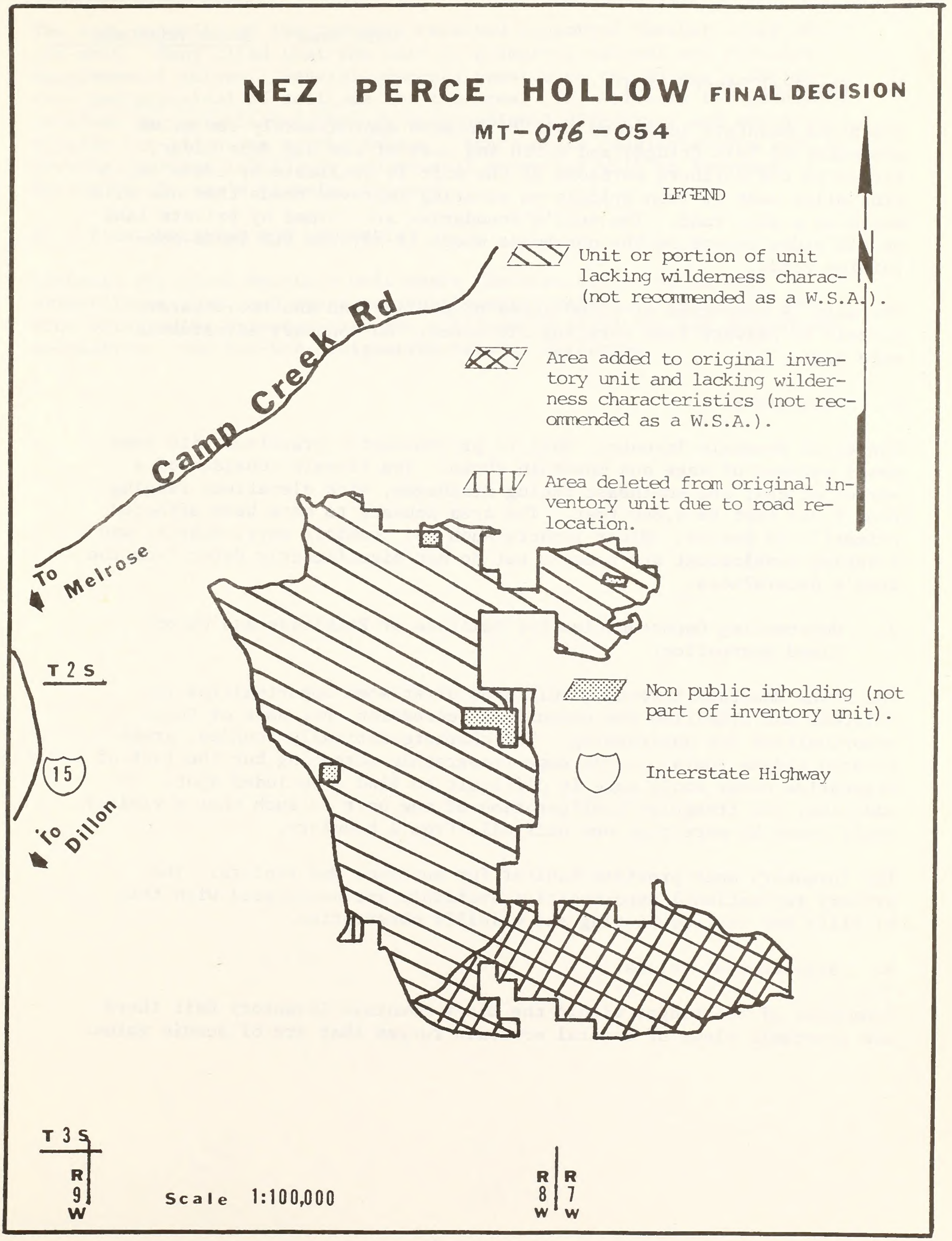
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

The majority of the comments received concerning this unit simply agreed or disagreed with the proposed decision. No new information was received that would warrant changing the decision.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Nez Perce Hollow Unit is not recommended for classification as a Wilderness Study Area. Although the area meets the size criteria, it does not appear primarily natural and possesses no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreations.


NEZ PERCE HOLLOW FINAL DECISION
MT-076-054
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness charac- (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
Interstate Highway
N
Camp Creek Rd
To Melrose
To Dillon
15
T 2 S
T 3 S
R 9 W
R 8 W
R 7 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-059

Unit Name Block Mountain

1. Physical Description:

The Block Mountain Inventory Unit is located approximately ten miles southwest of Twin Bridges and north and west of the Big Hole River. Access to the northern portions of the unit is available by traveling nine miles west of Twin Bridges on existing improved roads then one mile south on a dirt road. The unit's boundaries are formed by private land on all sides except on the northeast where it adjoins BLM lands containing roads.

The unit is comprised of 6,700 acres of public land and two separate parcels of private land totaling 320 acres. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The Block Mountain Inventory Unit is predominantly grassland with some small patches of sage and mountain shrub. The terrain consists of a series of east and southeast facing drainages, with elevations ranging from 6,029 feet to 4,840 feet. The area appears to have been affected primarily by nature. Minor impacts such as: vehicle ways, debris, and a spring development are present but do not significantly deter from the area's naturalness.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Block Mountain Inventory Unit does offer some opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, but none of these opportunities are outstanding. The characteristically rounded, grass covered ridges would provide some topographic screening but the lack of vegetative cover would make it difficult to find a secluded spot. In addition, the irregular configuration of the unit is such that a visitor would never be more than one half mile from a boundary.

The inventory unit provides habitat for antelope and raptors. The primary recreational opportunities available are associated with this wildlife and include hunting and wildlife observation.

4. Supplemental Values:

From most of the ridges within the Block Mountain Inventory Unit there are panoramic views of several mountain ranges that are of scenic value.

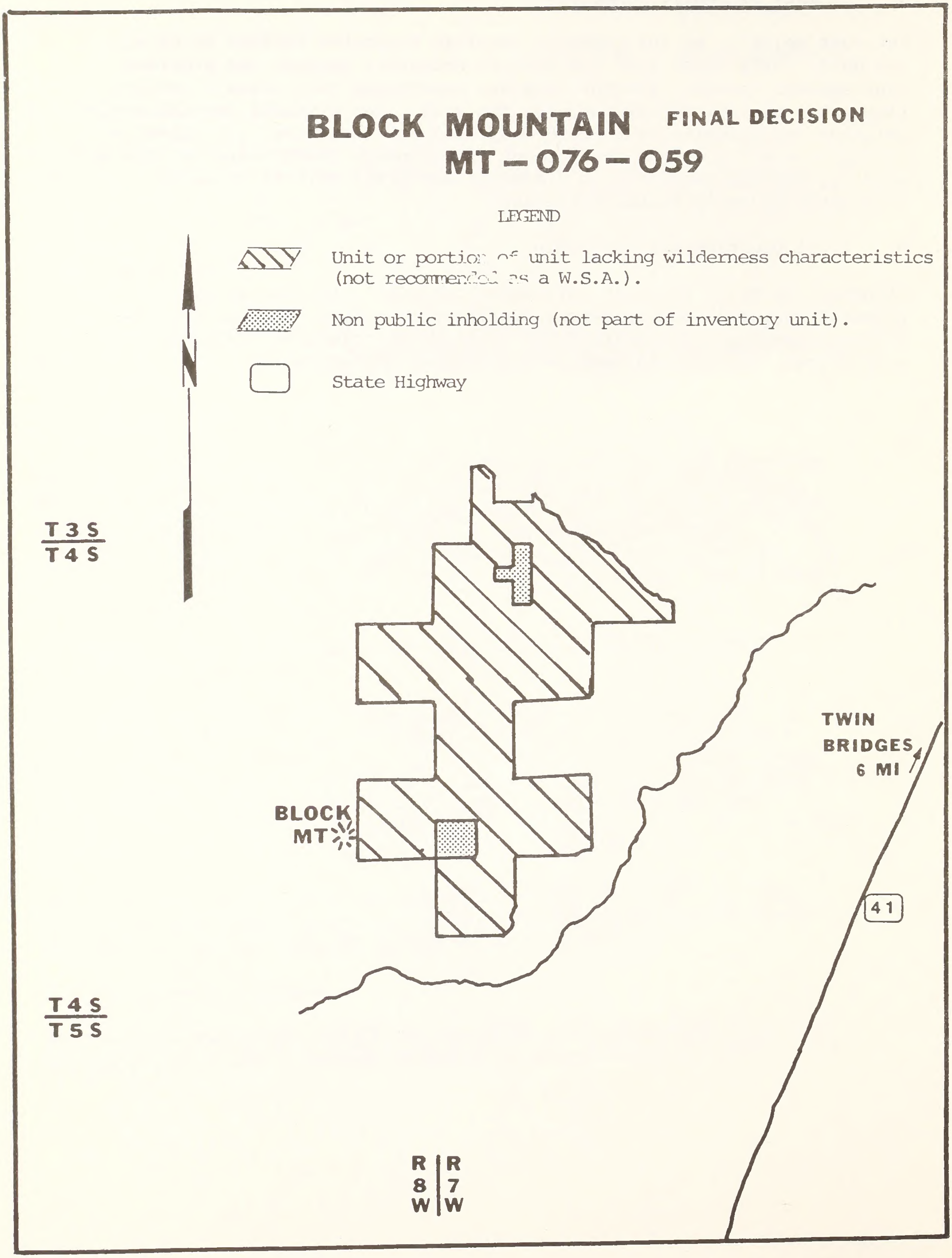
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

The vast majority of the comments received supported further study of the unit. Many cited that the unit is primarily natural and provides supplemental values. Several comments questioned the Bureau's definition and appraisal of solitude for the area. The criteria for assessing solitude was established through Congressional directives and appraised equally for all units by the Bureau. Study phase considerations such as grazing, private inholdings and mineral potential will be assessed during the Bureau's Planning Process.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

Although the Block Mountain unit meets the size criteria, appears primarily natural, and possesses supplemental values, it does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The non-WSA designation remains unchanged.



BLOCK MOUNTAIN FINAL DECISION
MT – 076 – 059

LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

▒ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).

▢ State Highway

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-070

Unit Name Sweetwater

1. Physical Description:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit is located seven miles southwest of Ruby Reservoir and north of Sweetwater Creek. Public access is available by turning off highway 287 in Alder and traveling south on the Sweetwater Road for approximately eighteen miles. The unit's boundaries are almost entirely formed by private land except in a small portion of the east, northeast, and southwest where state land forms the boundary.

Within the orginal boundaries there are 7,750 acres of public land and two separate parcels of private land totaling 200 acres. A minor boundary adjustment was made during the inventory stage to exclude a road that traverses the unit for a short distance. This adjustment deletes only one acre of land and therefore the final size of the is unit is 7,749 acres of public land.

2. Naturalness:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit is predominately open sagebrush slopes with a few isolated timber stands. There is a central plateau with numerous gently sloping drainages on the western and southwestern side whereas the northern and eastern slopes tend to be steeper.

Imprints of man's work are present within the unit and some were found that significantly deter from the area's naturalness. Numerous vehicle ways, some of which are improved, traverse over eighteen miles of the unit. The entire unit is covered by grazing allotments and contains associated range improvements. Many signs of overgrazing exist. The cumulative effects from the impacts associated with the numerous vehicle ways and grazing are significantly noticeable and detract from the apparent naturalness of the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit does provide some opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, but none of these opportunities are outstanding. Vegetative screening is virtually absent in all but 25% of the unit but the varied terrain does provide fairly good topographic screening. The primary recreational opportunities are associated with the various species of wildlife that inhabit the area. These include wildlife observation, nature study, bird watching, photography, and some big game hunting.

4. Supplemental Values:

The Sweetwater Inventory Unit contains wildlife species of ecological value, rock outcroppings of geological value, and a prehistoric chert quarry of anthropological value.

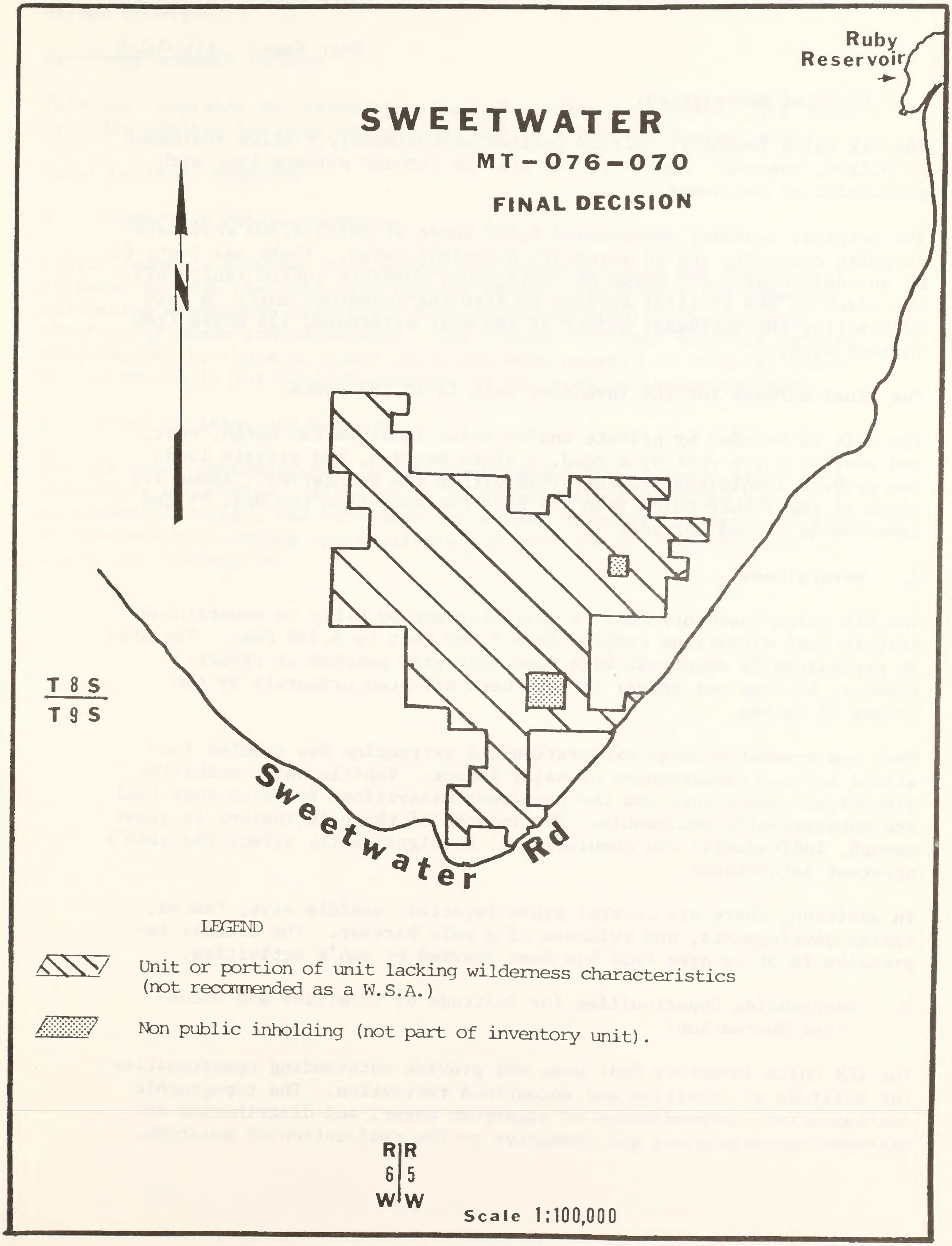
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Although several comments were received saying that this unit should receive further study few referred to wilderness characteristics. Some referred to wildlife values and other study phase considerations. One stated that existing impacts were similar to those in other units and were capable of rehabilitation. Due to the nature of the soils and lack of moisture in the unit, this was not felt to be case.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

It is recommended that the Sweetwater Inventory Unit be dropped from further wilderness study. Although the unit does contain 7,749 acres of public land and has supplemental values, it does not appear to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature nor does it have outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.


SWEETWATER
MT-076-070
FINAL DECISION
Ruby Reservoir
N
T 8 S
T 9 S
Sweetwater Rd
LEGEND
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)
░ Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
R 6 W
R 5 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-076-071

Unit Name Elk Gulch

1. Physical Description:

The Elk Gulch Inventory Unit is located approximately 9 miles southeast of Dillon, Montana. Access to the area is through private land with permission of the owner.

The original boundary encompassed 8,390 acres of which 8,350 acres are in pubic ownership and 40 acres are privately owned. There was found to be an additional 2,097 acres of contiguous, roadless public land; this was added to the original acreage to form the inventory unit. A road transecting the northeast corner of the unit eliminated 155 acres from further study.

The final acreage for the inventory unit is 10,292 acres.

The unit is bounded by private and/or state lands on the north, west, and south, on the east by a road, a state section, and private land. Two private inholdings are contained within the boundaries. About 1.5 miles of the Timber Gulch Road has been excluded from the unit by the creation of a road corridor.

2. Naturalness:

The Elk Gulch Inventory Unit is characterized by hilly to mountainous terrain with elevations ranging from 5,980 feet to 8,348 feet. The area is predominantly sagebrush with some scattered patches of timber. However, it does not appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

Past and present mineral exploration and extraction has created localized surface disturbances of major impact. Vehicle ways exhibiting significant bench cuts and the prominent excavations to which they lead are substantially noticeable. The impacts of these intrusions is great enough, individually and cumulatively, to signficantly affect the area's apparent naturalness.

In addition, there are several minor impacts: vehicle ways, fences, spring developments, and evidence of a pole harvest. The overall impression is of an area that has been scarred by man's activities.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The ELk Gulch Inventory Unit does not provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The topographic configuration, preponderance of sagebrush cover, and distribution of man-made intrusions are not conducive to the realization of solitude.

Opportunities for recreation are basically limited to hunting which is not of outstanding quality. In short, the area possesses neither a diversity in number of activities possible nor the outstanding quality of one opportunity.

4. Supplemental Values:

This unit contains ecological features of supplemental value. The area provides habitat for deer and grouse, and is a raptor breeding area.

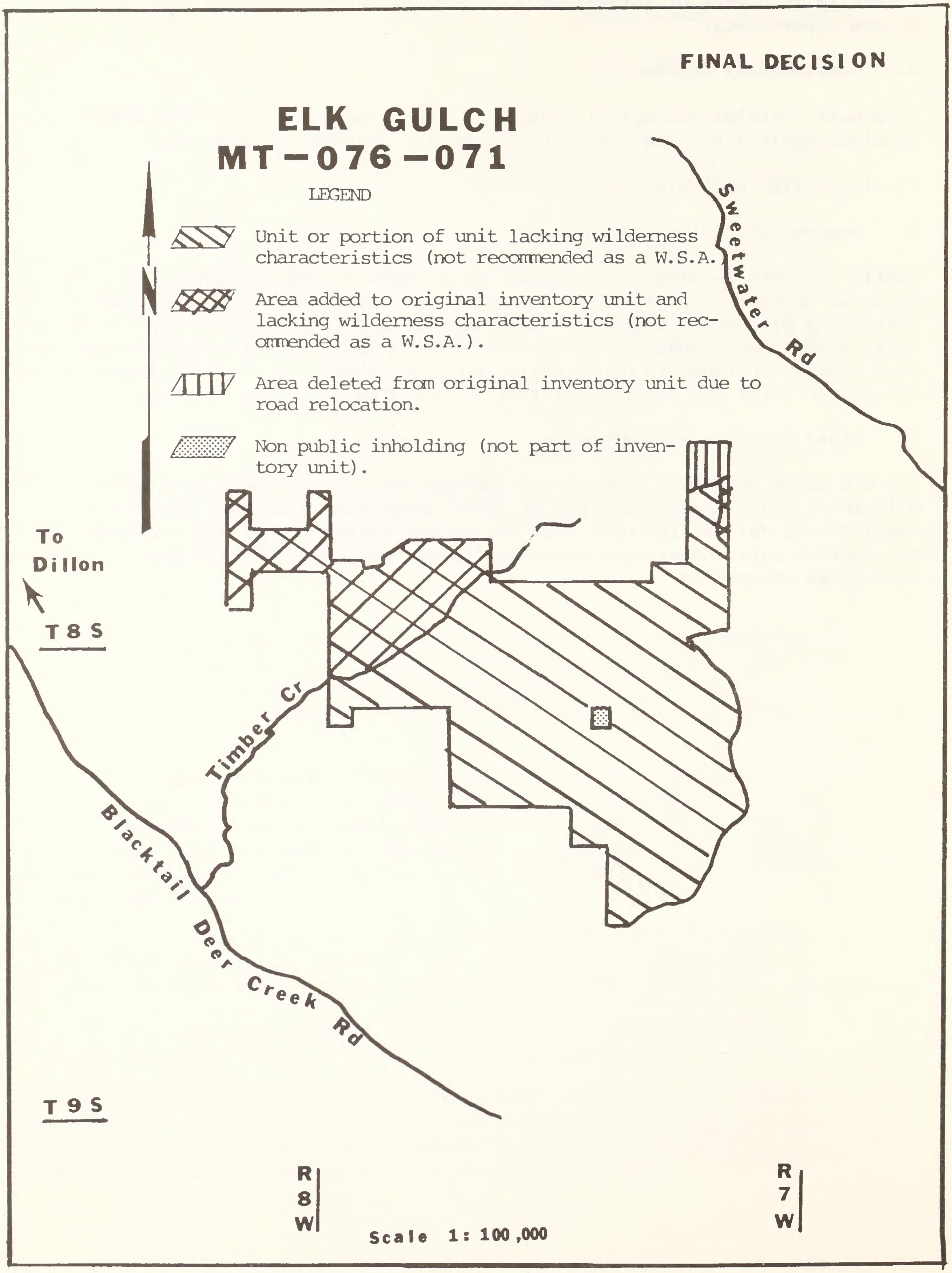
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

Public comments received both agreed and disagreed with the Bureau's proposal to drop the unit from further study. There were few comments addressing wilderness criteria. Some addressed wildlife values and other study phase considerations. One pointed out that existing impacts were similar to those in other units and were cabable of rehabilitation. Due to the soils and limited moisture in the area no change was made.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Elk Gulch Inventory Unit is not recommended for classification as a wilderness study area. Although it is of sufficient size and has supplemental values, the unit does not appear primarily natural and does not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.


FINAL DECISION
ELK GULCH
MT-076-071
LEGEND
Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.)
Area added to original inventory unit and lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).
Area deleted from original inventory unit due to road relocation.
Non public inholding (not part of inventory unit).
N
Sweetwater Rd
To Dillon
T 8 S
Timber Cr
Blacktail Deer Creek Rd
T 9 S
R 8 W
R 7 W
Scale 1: 100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-123

Unit Name Missouri River Isl.

1. Physical Description:

This unit is an unnamed 22 acre island in the Missouri River that is entirely public land. The island is located 30 miles southwest of Great Falls, Montana in T. 17 N., R. 1 W., Sections 17 and 20.

2. Naturalness:

The unit is comprised of a wise diversity of plant life and topographix features. Shallow backwater coves and inlets, deep offshore pools, cattail marshes, grassy knolls and inland swamps are interspersed with old growth cottonwood stands and willow thickets. Swamps and grass covered areas each comprise approximately 25 percent of the island. Deciduous trees, interspersed among the former, comprise the other 50 percent. The elevation of the island is around 3,360 feet.

No on-site intrusions are present, although impacts to the naturalness of the unit from off-site sources are considerable. Interstate 15 and the old, still used, State Highway 91 are within one-quarter to one-half mile from the unit. Railroad tracks directly parallel the northwestern end of the island and are within one-quarter mile of the unit. Houses are visible across the eastern and western shore. Sight and sound intrusions from these sources significantly affect the apparent naturalness of the island.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitve and Unconfined Recreation:

Opportunities for solitude are present, but due to the unit's very small size, outstanding opportunities are lacking; other visitors to the island would be easily heard or noticed.

Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are rather limited, although the opportunities that are present are of high quality. Rainbow trout fishing in the surrounding water can be considered excellent, especially in the bays and coves along the western shore. The diversity of bird life on the island, due largely to the wide diversity of vegetation, assures that bird watching would be outstanding. Photographic, botanical and zoological sightseeing opportunities are also present but are not of outstanding quality.

4. Supplemental Values:

The area possesses a wide variety of birdlife that is of educational and possibly scientific value. Cormorants and other waterfowl use the inland old growth cottonwoods and marshes for protected nesting sites. Osprey hunt the waters surrounding the island. A variety of shorebirds, including avocets, roam the shores in search of food. The swamps, grassy areas, willow thickets and old growth cottonwoods support a wide variety of songbirds.

Final Decision Alaysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

There were only two comments addressing the area. One supported further study and the other did not. A wide variety of associated birdlife was noted.

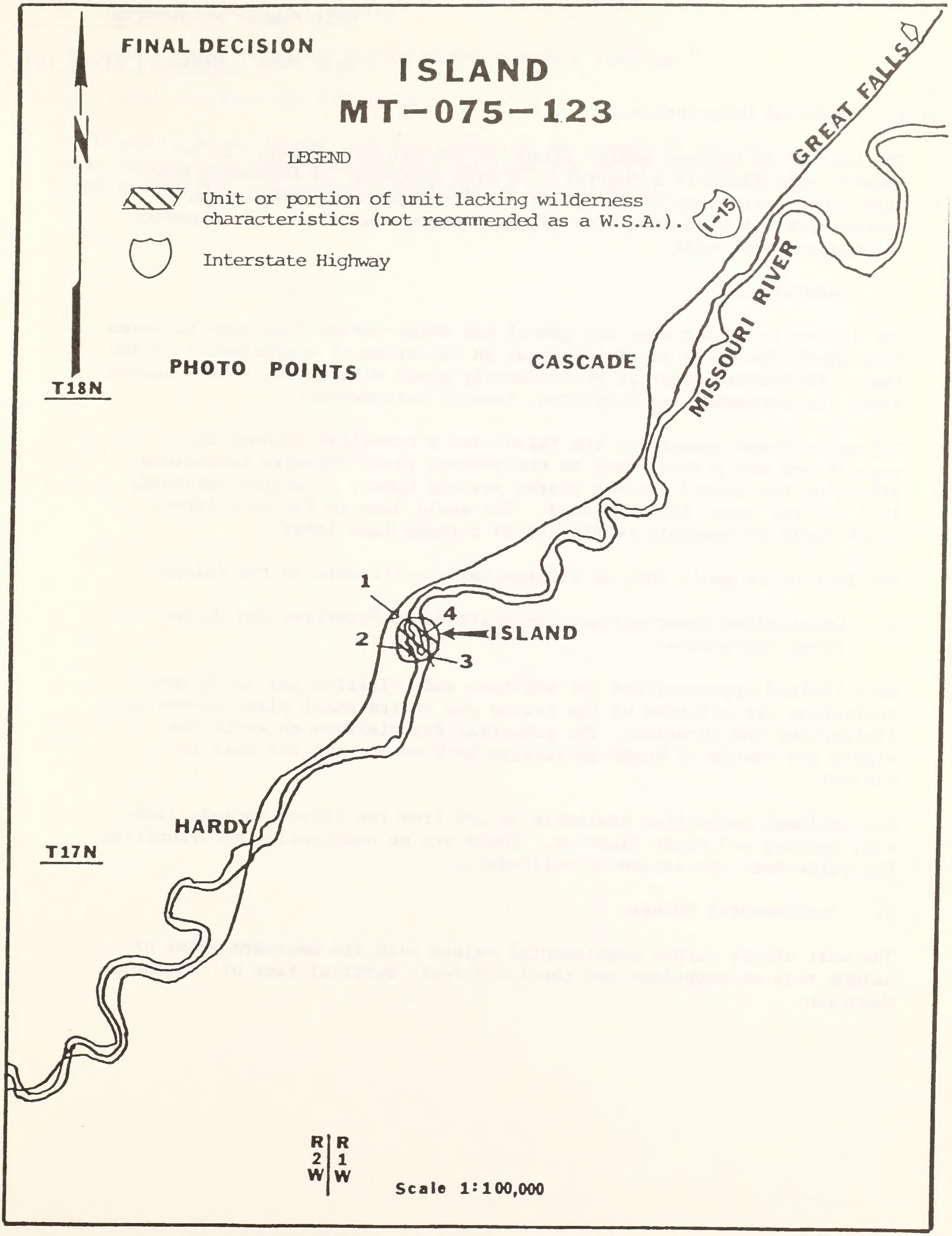
6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Missouri River Island was found not to possess wilderness criteria due to the significant off-site intrusions. The non-WSA designation is unchanged.

FINAL DECISION

ISLAND

MT-075-123



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-124

Unit Name Missouri River Isl.

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed public island in the Missouri River. It is located approximately a quarter of a mile southeast of Chrisholm Mountain along Interstate 15 and the state frontage road. The island is twelve acres in size and there are no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a flat sand and gravel bar which varies from zero to seven feet above the river level (July) at an elevation of approximately 3,400 feet. Vegetative cover is predominantly grass with thick, willow shrubs along its perimeter and scattered, interim cottonwoods.

The major human impacts on the island are a powerline through the eastern end and a small dump on the western tip. Off-site intrusions affecting the island include nearby private homes, an active railroad, I-15 and the state frontage road The small dump is the only impact which could be feasibly rehabilitated through land labor.

The imprint of man's work is substantially noticeable on the island.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Uncon fined Recreation:

Only limited opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined-recreation are afforded by the island due to its small size, screening limitations and location. The potential for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of human activities both on and off the unit is minimal.

Recreational activities available on and from the island include fishing, hunting and river floating. There are no outstanding opportunities for wilderness recreation or solitude.

4. Supplemental Values:

The unit offers scenic supplemental values with its westward views of unique rock outcroppings and the 1,200 foot, vertical face of Chrisholm Mountain.

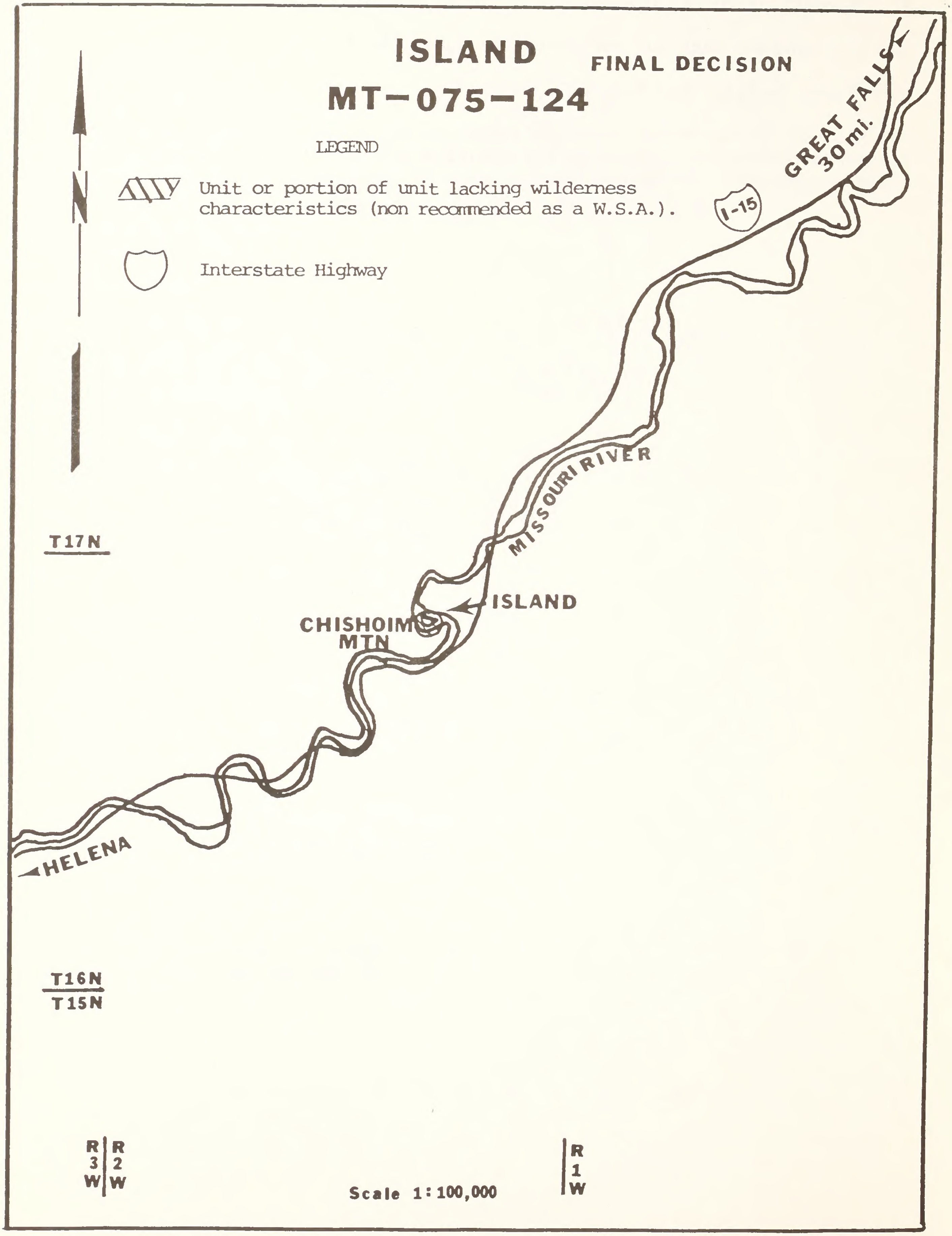
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

The only comment received supported the Bureau's findings.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

The Missouri River Island does not appear to be primarily natural and lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The non-WSA designation is unchanged.


ISLAND
MT-075-124
FINAL DECISION
LEGEND
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (non recommended as a W.S.A.).
Interstate Highway
N
GREAT FALLS 30 mi.
I-15
MISSOURI RIVER
ISLAND
CHISHOIM MTN
HELENA
T17N
T16N
T15N
R 3 W
R 2 W
R 1 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-125

Unit Name Missouri River Island

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed island in the Missouri River. It is located about two miles north of Craig, Montana along Interstate 15. The island is five acres in size and there are no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a flat gravel and sand bar which varies from zero to five feet above the river level (July) at an elevation of approximately 3,400 feet. Roughly eighty percent of the unit is densely vegetated by short willow groves. The remaining interior is grass covered. The major river channel flows west of the island.

No human impacts were found to exist on the island. Off-site intrusions within definite influential range include an active railroad, Interstate 15 and the state frontage road. These intrusions are all within a quarter of a mile.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Only limited opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are provided by the island due to its small size, screening limitations and location. The potential for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of human activities both on and off the unit is minimal.

Recreational activities available from the island include fishing and river floating. There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Supplemental Values:

The island has no known features of supplemental value.

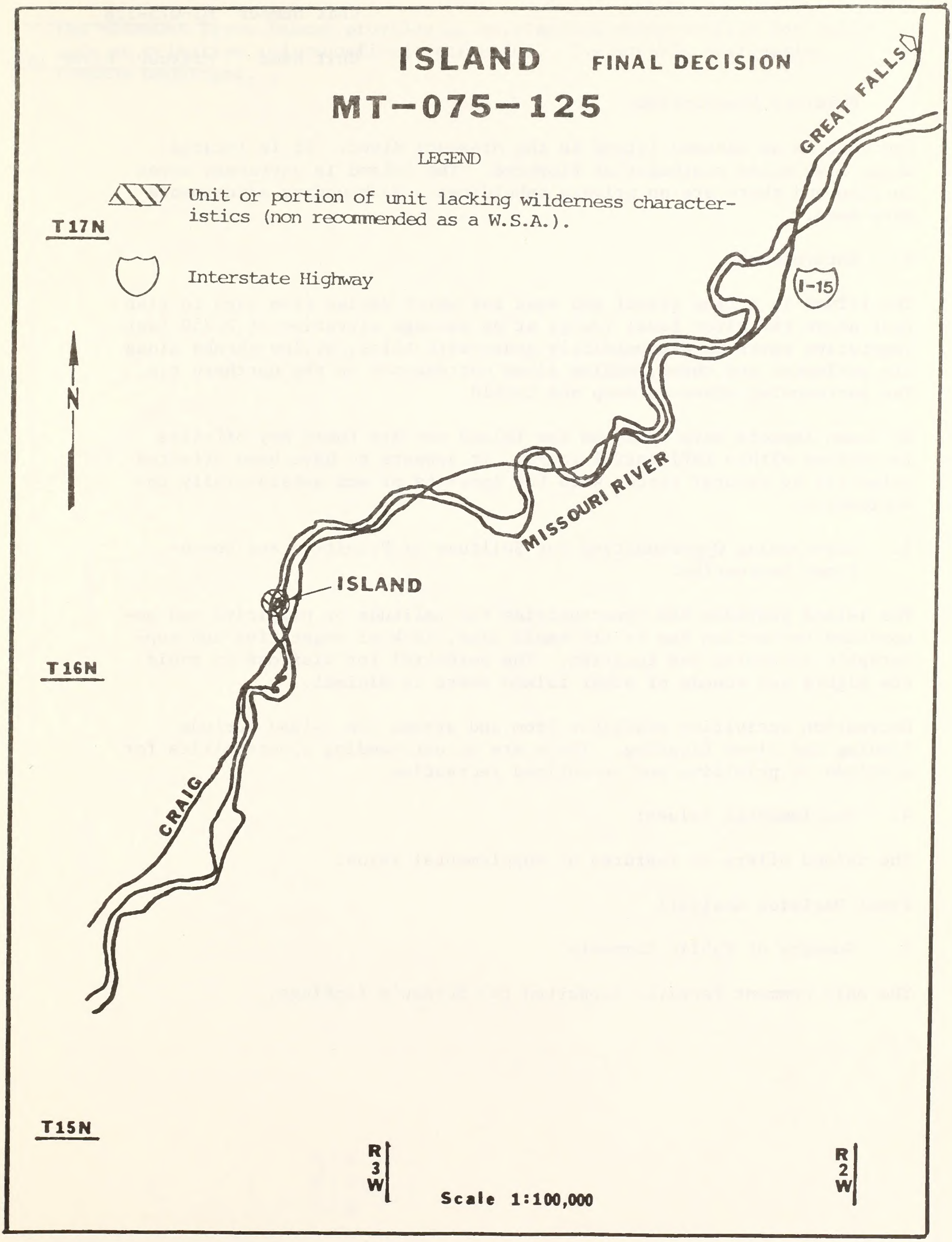
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

The only comment received supported the Bureau's findings.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

The Missouri River Island is not primarily natural due to the influence of off-site intrusions and lacks outstanding opportunities for both solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The non-WSA designation is unchanged.


ISLAND FINAL DECISION
MT-075-125
LEGEND
▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (non recommended as a W.S.A.).
Interstate Highway
T17N
T16N
T15N
N
GREAT FALLS
I-15
MISSOURI RIVER
ISLAND
CRAIG
R 3 W
R 2 W
Scale 1:100,000

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-126

Unit Name Missouri River Isl.

1. Physical Description:

The unit is an unnamed island in the Missouri River. It is located about five miles southeast of Floweree. The island is seventeen acres in size and there are no private inholdings. No boundary adjustments were made.

2. Naturalness:

The island is a flat gravel and sand bar which varies from zero to five feet above the river level (July) at an average elevation of 2,750 feet. Vegetative cover is predominately grass with thick, willow shrubs along its perimeter and three, medium sized cottonwoods on the northern tip. The surrounding river is deep and turbid.

No human impacts were found on the island nor are there any off-site intrusions within influential range. It appears to have been affected primarily by natural forces with the imprints of man substantially unnoticeable.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

The island provides few opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation due to its small size, lack of vegetative and topographic screening and location. The potential for visitors to avoid the sights and sounds of other island users is minimal.

Recreation activities available from and around the island include fishing and river floating. There are no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

4. Supplemental Values:

The island offers no features of supplemental value.

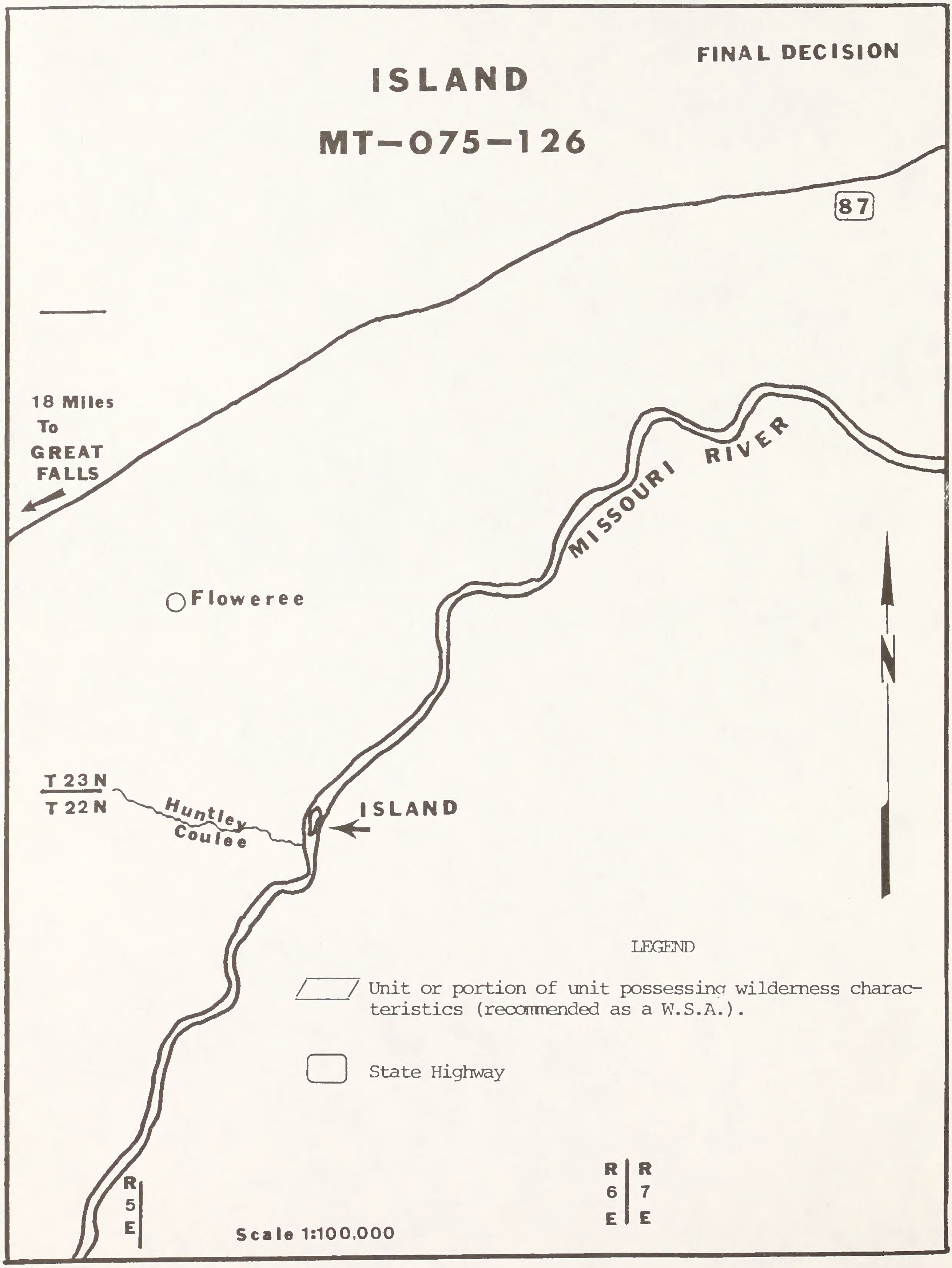
Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments

The only comment received supported the Bureau's findings.

6. Final Decision and Rationale

The Missouri River Island provides no outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. The non-WSA designation remains unchanged.



FINAL DECISION

ISLAND

MT-075-126

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-134

Unit Name Missouri River Isl.

1. Physical Description:

This 23 acre island is located 19 miles east of Livingston, Montana in T. 1 S., R. 12 E., Sections 15 and 22. Surrounding lands are in private ownership. The elevation is 4,220 feet.

2. Naturalness:

The island is relatively flat and very densely forested predominantly with cottonwoods and willows that completely cover the island. Water depths surrounding the island vary up to two feet. It is probable that by mid to late August parts of these channels would be dry, connecting the unit to other adjacent, privately owned islands and to the shore.

No impacts are present on the island itself, but the close promimity of Interstate 90, an irrigation pump, a County road, a bridge crossing, and a nearby railroad severely impair the naturalness of the area. These off-site intrusions are visible and well within hearing range from the unit.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Due to the extreme density of vegetation and the lack of adjacent deep water, primitive recreation opportunities are generally lacking and are not outstanding. Bird watching is the only recreational opportunity present.

4. Supplemental Values:

No discernible supplemental values are present.

Final Decision Analysis

5. Summary of Public Comments:

The only comment received supported the Bureau's feelings.

6. Final Decision and Rationale:

The Yellowstone River Island is not primarily natural due to the influence of off-site intrusions and lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The non-WSA designation is unchanged.

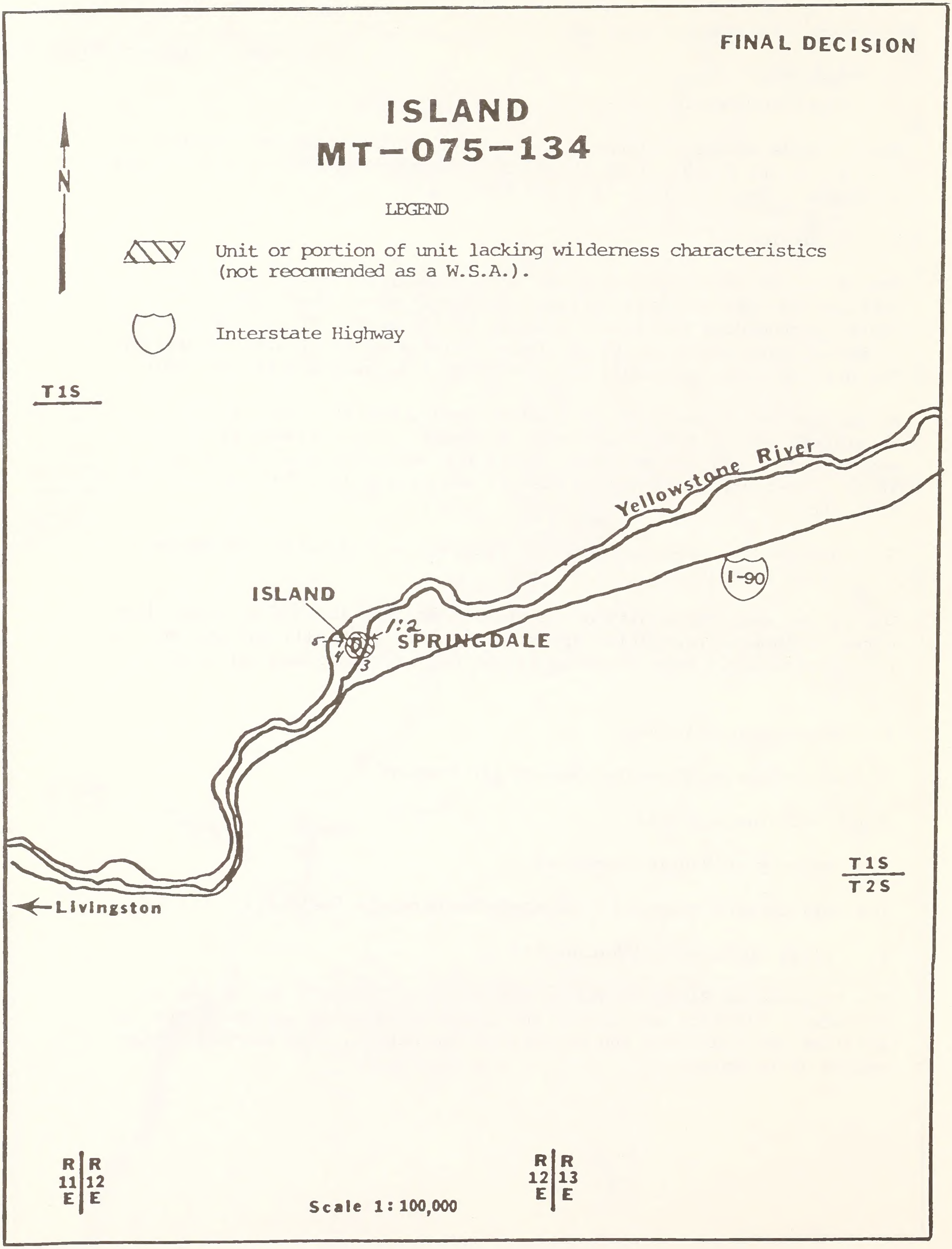
FINAL DECISION

ISLAND
MT-075-134

LEGEND

▨ Unit or portion of unit lacking wilderness characteristics (not recommended as a W.S.A.).

Interstate Highway



WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Unit Number MT-075-138

Unit Name Missouri River Isl.

1. Physical Description:

This unit consists of two islands. The upstream island is approximately 10 acres and the downstream island is approximately 30 acres. They are located between 15 and 18 miles southeast of Townsend, Montana, and five miles apart. The downstream island is located in Toston Reservoir.

2. Naturalness:

The downstream island is in actuality a series of marshes, interlaced with water channels, cattail marshes, willow groves, and a few dead remnant trees from before the building of Toston Dam. The area appears to be rich in waterfowl habitat, and hole nesting birds have taken up residence in some of the dead trees protruding from the marsh. No impacts of man are present.

The upstream island is basically a flat, largely grass covered gravel bar with a few junipers and willows that cover about 20 percent of the area. Extensive grazing has occurred and negatively affects apparent naturalness. This island is connected to the western shore by a presently dry channel.

The naturalness of the islands is significantly affected by off-site impacts. The upper island is within definite sight and sound range of two railroads. The lower island is also visually and audibly affected by an adjacent railroad and a pump station just across the river to the northwest.

3. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation:

Primitve and unconfined recreation is limited on the island. The downstream island is composed of marshes; walking on the island would be difficult, if not impossible. Primitive recreation opportunities here consist of fishing and the hunting and observation of waterfowl. Opportunities on the upstream island are similarly lacking, and are limited to fishing and camping. Neither island provides outstanding opportunities.

4. Supplemental Values:

Nesting birds in the downstream island could have educational and scientific value, and the island itself is of scenic value.

5. Summary of Public Comments:

The only comment received supported the Bureau's findings.

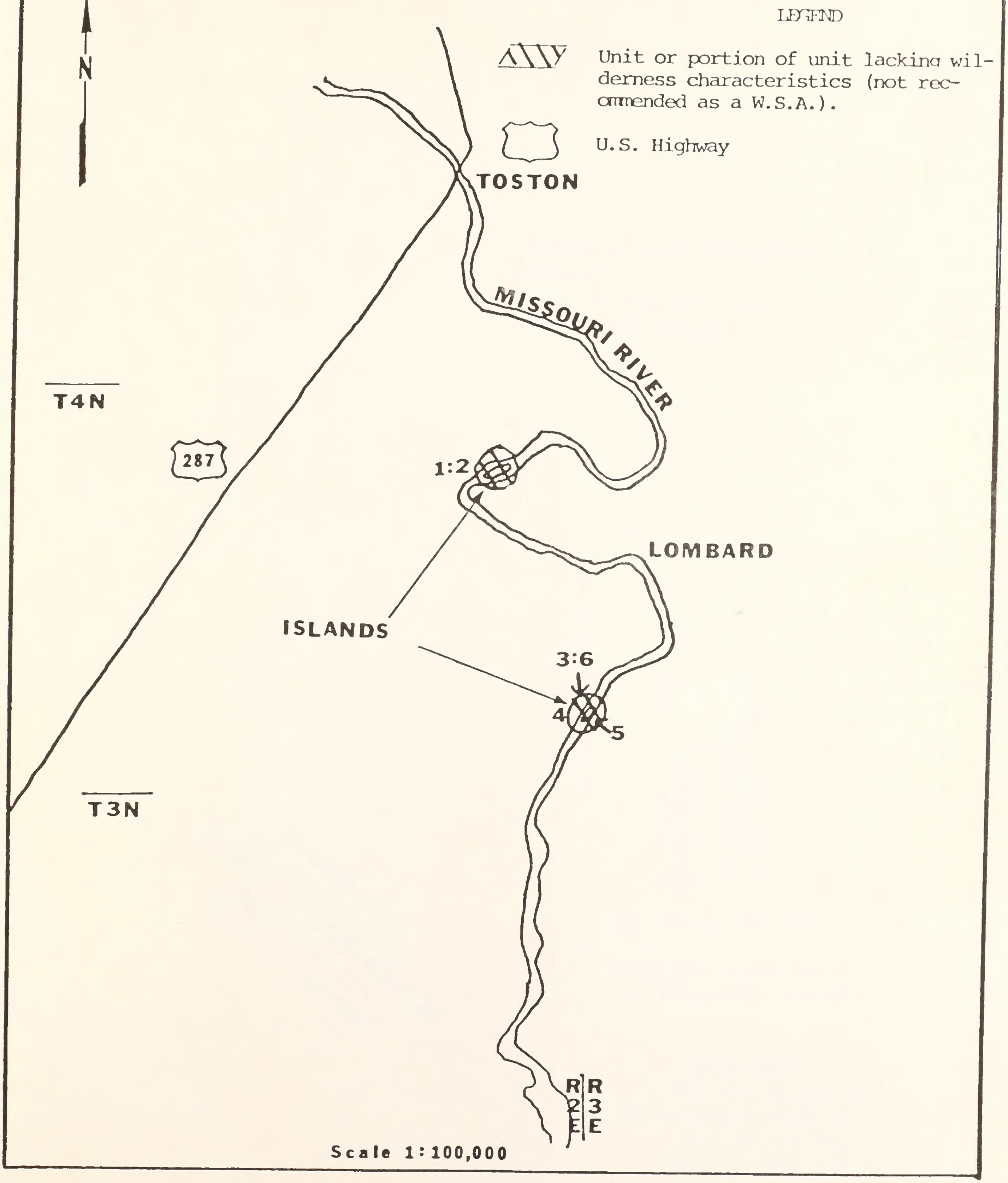
6. Final Decision and Rationale:

These 2 Missouri River Islands are not primarily natural and lack outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The non-WSA designation is unchanged.

ISLAND

MT-075-138

FINAL DECISION



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inventory, Butte
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Montana overthrust belt
wilderness inventory, Butte

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BLACKFEET INDIAN RESERVATION
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HILL
Cut Bank
Shelby
Whitefish
Kalispell
PONDERA
Conrad
Tiber Reservoir
Lonesome Prairie
STANDARD PARALLEL
FLATHEAD LAKE
LAKE
SANDERS
FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION
TETON
Choteau
CHOUTEAU
Fort Benton
102
105
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107
110
126
GREAT FALLS
CASCADE
123
124
125
FERGUS
JUDITH BASIN
MINERAL
MISSOULA
POWELL
150
WALES CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
151A
151B
LEWIS AND CLARK

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MONTANA WILDERNESS INVENTORY

FINAL DECISION MAP
OVERTHRUST BELT

BUTTE DISTRICT
MARCH 1980

Scale 1:500,000
1 inch equals approximately 8 miles

Contour interval 500 feet
Datum is mean sea level

Compiled, edited, and published by the Geological Survey. 1927 North American datum
Lambert conformal conic projection based on standard parallels 33° and 45°

LEGEND

- State capital
- County seat
- City, town, or village
- Scheduled service airport
- Interstate highway
- U. S. highway
- State highway
- Other principal roads

POPULATION KEY

GREAT FALLS	more than 50,000
MISSOULA	10,000 to 50,000
Lewistown	2,500 to 10,000
Fort Benton	1,000 to 2,500
Stanford	less than 1,000

Population indicated by size of letters

🟩	U.S. Forest Service Lands
🟧	Wilderness Study Areas
■	Intensive Inventory Unit Dropped From Wilderness Consideration

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Denver, CO 80225

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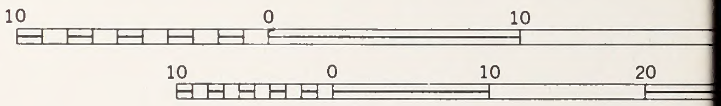

Contour interval 5
Datum is mean se

Compiled, edited, and published by the Geological S
Lambert conformal conic projection based on

LEGEND

✪	State capital	—(90)—	Interstate highway
◉	County seat	—(40)—	U. S. highway
○	City, town, or village	—(20)—	State highway
✈	Scheduled service airport	———	Other principal roads

🟩	**U.S. Forest Service Lands**
🟧	**Wilderness Study Areas**
⬛	**Intensive Inventory Unit Dro**

115°00′